Film
QUARTERLY

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Film Quarterly

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TRANSCENDENTAL STYLE?

JOHN SAYLES:
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NEW PERIODICAL

Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television is the journal of the International Assn. for Audio-Visual Media in Historical Research and Education. Its first issue contains articles on proletarian cinema and the Weimar Republic, the British response to Hollywood in the thirties, French cinema during World War II, and British propaganda ground rules during World War II. Published by the Carfax Publishing Company, Haddon House, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxford 0X9 8JZ, England.

FILM QUARTERLY (ISSN 0015-1386) is published quarterly at the subscription prices given below by the University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720. Second-class postage paid at Berkeley, California, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to **Film Quarterly**, University of California Press, Berkeley CA 94720. $2.00 per copy. $7.50 per year, in the U.S. Elsewhere $9.50 per year. Institutional rates slightly higher. Editor: Ernest Callenbach. Assistants to the Editor: Cynthia Deno and Robin Dellabough. New York Editor: William Johnson. Los Angeles Editor: Michael Dempsey. Boston Editor: Randall Conrad. London Editor: Colin Young. Rome Editor: Gideon Bachmann. Advisory Editorial Board: Andries Deinum, John Fell, Brian Henderson, Albert Johnson, Marsha Kinder, Neal Oxenhandler. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the authors. Indexed in **Art Index**, **Book Review Index**, **Film Literature Index**, **Humanities Index**, **International Index to Film Periodicals**, **Monthly Cumulating Periodical Index**, and **Popular Periodical Index**. Printed in U.S.A. Type: Freedmen's Organization, Los Angeles. Printing: Peter J. Levison Associates, San Francisco. © 1981 by the Regents of the University of California. Back issues subsequent to Volume 18 (1965-1966) can be obtained from the University of California Press.

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TOM SCHLESINGER

Putting People Together

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN SAYLES

John Sayles wrote, directed, produced, acted in, and edited *Return of the Secaucus Seven*, a movie that is receiving high acclaim nationwide. Only 30, Sayles is also an award-winning short-story writer and novelist: his novel *Union Dues* was nominated for a National Book Award. He broke into film through the Roger Corman training ground, New World Pictures. After writing screenplays for *Piranha*, *Battle Beyond the Stars*, and *The Lady in Red*, Sayles gathered his profits and financed *Secaucus Seven* for a mere $60,000.

But there are no man-eating fish, intergalactic battles, or machine-gun volleys in *Secaucus Seven*. Eight sixties-generation cohorts converge on a New England cottage for a ten-year reunion—a weekend of reminiscing, comparing notes on turning 30, and planning for the future.

Sayles, who also scripted *The Howling*, has several writer-director contracts with major studios in the works. He made a surprise visit to the Cinema/Chicago screening of *Return of the Secaucus Seven*, at which time this interview was recorded.

How did you get involved in the film industry? Did you go to film school or have any formal training?

No, actually I got an agent by writing two novels and a short story collection, and then selling the first novel myself. I was acting and directing in the summer theater and I couldn't sell my second one, so I called up this guy—I had never met him—and he became my literary agent. Immediately, his agency had a deal with a film agency on the west coast. I wrote them and said, you're already representing my book as a film property, so here's a screenplay as an audition piece.

What did your first screenplay concern?

There is sort of an ironic story there. I wrote about the Black Sox scandal of 1919. When I went out to Los Angeles they said, we love the screenplay, we want to represent you, but forget about the Black Sox scandal because the rights have been in litigation for twenty years. Then about a month ago, a friend of mind who directed the TV movie that I wrote (*Perfect Match*), told me he knew a woman just starting out as a producer who bought the rights to Elliot Asinof's book, *Eight Men Out*, which is really the definitive work; if you have that, you have the rights to the story. So we're going to get together on that. It's six years later and I had just written it off.

Did you have any kind of formal training in screenwriting?

I hadn't gone to film school. I had an agent, I moved out to Santa Barbara, and I was just writing when I got a job doing a rewrite of *Piranha*. New World Pictures used my script and *Piranha* made millions of dollars, so I wrote two other scripts for them. Basically, I was just self-taught. I had seen a lot of movies—that was my film school.

Do you structure or outline your stories before you begin the actual writing?

I had written a couple of books, so I knew how to write dialogue with my eyes closed. As far as structure was concerned, basically the way I write a movie is I just sort of close my eyes and think it out, sort of see it in my head, and then I write out an outline if I have the time to do that.

Do you ever use scene cards?

No, I end up just going from an outline and just going from the beginning until it is filled out.

When you are doing this outline, do you break it up into a beginning, middle, and end? Are you conscious of setting up the problem, putting up obstacles, and moving toward the resolution?

Yeah. For instance, in *Piranha*, I was sort of on my own. One nice thing about working at New World is they're very clear about what they want. They say, I see this as an action picture with some humor and there should be a certain amount of either attacks by fish or threats of attacks by fish.

So I decided that given a 90 to 100 minute movie, there should be a piranha attack every ten minutes. You open the picture with one and then every ten minutes you have another attack or some kind of action sequence. The basic problem with the story was, how do we get the piranha into the river? The first part of the story was about this but then I asked, why doesn't everyone just stay out of the river? They wanted the piranhas descending on the summer camp at the end so I had the end point. I drew a picture of a river and a lake and I said, okay, here's a schematic, visual thing of what happens but there's no point where the people are going to have a rest. So I drew a dam in the middle of it: the first half of the movie is getting to this dam; the second half of this movie is the piranhas getting around this dam, and then it started taking shape and incidents started taking shape before I had any characters.

The piranhas were, then, your protagonists?

Oh yeah. Somebody from one of the more "intellectual" film journals was talking to me about *Piranha* and how horror movies are always an allegory for something and I was trying to convince him that *Piranha* was actually an allegory to the cultural revolution in China and the piranhas were the Red Guard, and the four bad guys were the Gang of Four, and the heroes were actually Mao having let these things out accidentally and trying to get them back in. It works, but almost anything works when you think about it that way.

Are you partial to any duration in your stories? In other words, Return of the Secaucus Seven *took place over a weekend; do you prefer working in shorter time periods where you can condense the action and take a slice-of-life type approach?*

Actually, *Secaucus Seven* was that way mostly because of the budget. *The Lady in Red,* which I wrote, happens over three years. A lot of filmmaking is handling time. You're just given (in the case of rewrites) or you just make up the time period of the thing, so that the movies have a certain pace to them. *Lady in Red* didn't turn out the way I wanted because they just didn't have the budget to make the movie right. I wanted that to be a real breathless, '30s, Jimmy Cagney everybody-talking-fast type movie. It turned out a little more like Louis Malle. Different movies have different speeds.

RETURN OF THE SECAUCUS SEVEN ▶

LADY IN RED (GUNS, SIN, AND BATHTUB GIN)

Within the scenes as well as the juxtaposition of the scenes throughout?

Yeah, and like in a horror movie, you try to give people a break after a big action scene. I wrote a picture that didn't get made called *The Terror of the Loch Ness.* MGM didn't feel that there was enough action in the picture. They didn't feel that the beast itself was that fascinating—which I did—and they wanted oil rigs exploding and submarine battles under seas, so I just had this list of about 25 action sequences in a one-hour movie. It was like *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* where every two seconds the whole ship would shake; and that was too bad. Then the minute they budgeted it, and they saw what all that action was going to cost, they said, okay, let's cut some of the action. But, basically, it doesn't matter what the time period of the story is. It's more important how you handle the time period as far as the audience's relief and tension is concerned. I think people like Hitchcock are the best at that because they'll have some stupid little scene and if you looked at it on paper you'd ask, what is this scene for? But he put it there because he's sort of lulling people so that he

can shock them or give them a break after a big suspense sequence.

Are you conscious of putting in this kind of relief in your outline? Setting up the whole structure so that there is a rhythm of rising and falling action.?

Yeah.

What type of screenplay form do you use when you write?

I got used to writing shooting scripts. I found that the most useful way to write, so I'd just write a shooting script with shot numbers. I don't get into a big discussion of angles, things like that, but I'll say "dissolve" or "cut" depending on how I want the time to go into transition. I'll say a "close up" or a "long shot" and it's up to the director whether or not he wants to follow it.

Does this approach ever offend the director?

Not really. Especially not at New World where the directors were getting handed the project with a month to do pre-production. They better have a good idea what's going on. It hasn't worked as well at the major studios where there are people and agents and this and that and the other thing and they keep talking about "fleshing it out" and I think what they mean is that even if you have characters who are obviously likeable because of the things they say and do, they want somewhere there to be: "We see RALPH, a handsome, likeable young man . . ." Unless you tell them everything that's going on in stage directions, they don't get it. So you end up having to write three or four different kinds of scripts: a selling script, which I can write, and then one for the producer and one for the director. With *Secaucus Seven*, it looks like there are no stage directions at all because I knew I was going to direct it.

What type of script do you write when you have a writing-directing deal with a major studio?

◀ Piranha

I am now in writing and directing deals with studios and that's part of the problem. I'm supposed to direct these if they get made so I'm writing them for myself. Then I hand them in and they say, well, we don't see anything here. Then I have to go back and spell it out in the rewrite without being too condescending.

No matter how good a story is, if the characters are flat, undeveloped, or inconsistent, it seems to fall apart. Furthermore, the characters will then be reacting to the plot elements rather than generating them. Do you ever do character biographies before you begin to write?

With *Secaucus Seven*, I didn't. With the things I've done for hire, I haven't because basically, I'm given the plot—we want a guy and a girl and that kind of thing—and then I just have to invent that as I go along. Rather than having a scene where the shark has just almost eaten them both and they're resting and they're talking about their lives very exposition-like, I try to have their action, their jobs, bring their character out. I'm very concerned with what people do for a living. So in *Piranha*, I had one guy who used to work in the mill that had been flooded in order to make a resort. He had a grudge against this lake. He almost hated the river and hated the lake because it had taken his job away from him. The girl was a skip tracer, and it was her job to find people as it was his job to hate this lake and sort of drink. So immediately, when they were on this river, there was something about it—she was always looking for someone and he was always grumbling. With *The Lady in Red*, it was the story of a woman who went through several jobs. She started out as this farm kid who worked for her father, who was an asshole. She ends up working in a sweat shop, becoming a dime-a-dance girl, being in prison and doing work there, then becoming a prostitute and then becoming a bank robber. So it's a progression of jobs for her.

Did you use a similar approach in your TV movie Perfect Match?

That was a true story I was given. Once again, I had the characters of the people. It was about a woman who had given up her child for adoption when she was 16. She developed a blood disease and had to find her daughter. They found her daughter and she had not been told she was adopted by her older adoptive parents, who were very pro-

tective. I tried to give them active things that they did that would help their character. I wanted this woman who had given her child up to have really straightened out her life and also to be somewhat glamorous, so that when she met her daughter, the daughter would be weaned away from her adoptive parents, and there would be a real conflict there. So I made the real mother a fashion designer in San Francisco. I made her adoptive father a guy who ran an icecream store because that's a very childlike thing. The story is about the girl trying to get away from this very childlike life and become something more glamorous. So I think what people do can help you with who they are.

And this is what generates the story?

It, finally, has to come out in the action. For screenplays, at least, that thing that Fitzgerald said—that action is character—works. And I'm much more interested in character than action so it's been nice sometimes for me to do these hired-gun jobs where they give me a plot or at least a situation because I don't have to think it up. I never would have woken up in the morning and said I had to write a movie about piranhas eating people, but once I was given one, if they agree on what they hand you to begin with, you can make the people whoever you want and they'll never give you a problem.

When you're given a plot or you create one yourself, do you forge any kind of emotional network between the characters involved in the plot? And how do you go about doing that?

This is actually one thing I learned from a book about screenwriting. There was an interview that Peter Bogdanovich did with Allan Dwan (*Sands of Iwo Jima*), who started screenwriting years after he had been directing in silent movies. He had this rule, which I also use in my fiction writing, that if you drew lines of emotional connection between the characters, you had to have at least two coming from every person. I saw *Roller Coaster* the other night and George Segal had a business-type relationship with his wife. He had emotional connections to other people, mostly antagonistic, but he only had one line to his wife. So basically, the wife was not needed. Unless you've got her into the story, and had a line going from her to another character, you really didn't need her.

Did you use this approach in Secaucus Seven?

In *Secaucus Seven* I ended up with all these people, a bunch of people that have lived with each other for a long time. If anybody has only one line drawn then it better be for a good reason, so I ended up with this sort of molecular structure where everyone had two or more lines to other characters and I could write on those lines what the relationship was. Only Chip had one line and that was the point of his character, that he was just hanging on by his fingernails. I've done that with most of my scripts and usually it means I cut a character or so. Now with something like *The Lady in Red,* there were a lot of characters that only had one line but they weren't emotional, they were for plot reasons. You try to make their dialogue as realistic as possible but you don't really have to know who that person is, as much as what their function is. There was a cop named Hennessey who at first we saw as a bag man for the mob, and then he had another line, sleeping with the madam, and then he also had a connection with the FBI. He was more or less the composite, corrupt Chicago cop, sort of the spider in the middle of the web. But he was a very minor character, he was just well-connected.

Sometimes if you isolate this emotional network from the story, it almost sounds like a soap opera. For instance, in Secaucus Seven, *the main action concerns a couple splitting up and the best friend sleeping with the wife. Did this network arise as a result of the characters or for the sake of something happening during the weekend?*

I think the emotional network arose from people I had known, and just knowing groups like that, and how over the years those lines do start to connect and tangle. Again, *Secaucus Seven* was a special case.

But isn't budget always a consideration when writing a screenplay?

At New World and other places I ask, how much do you want this to cost? I can write it big and I can write it small. And they always say, oh, just write it the way you want to. And then they don't put up enough money to film it the way I wrote it so I have to cut all this stuff. I don't know if they realize it or not but you just can't, at the last minute, take a scene out without the whole thing collapsing, if you write with any kind of subtlety and you don't have one scene where all the exposition happens. If you pace your exposi-

tion through a lot of scenes and they take one out, you've got to find another place to put that exposition or the whole plot makes no sense. So with most of the movies I've written, the whole plot makes no sense, if you really think about it. They move fast enough so you don't worry about it too much.

They'll always put in a chase scene instead of an expository scene and that may take out one of the missing links in the story.

In *The Lady in Red,* all the scenes where the people machine-gun other people are left in the movie and the ones that explain why the people are machine-gunning other people are gone—they didn't use them. Half the time, you don't even know why these people are shooting each other.

Which is enough to want to make your own movie. How did that come about?

I worked as an actor a couple summers in a summer stock company called the Eastern Slope Playhouse in New Hampshire, which is where we shot the film. I knew some of the actors there and the producer, and he knew everybody in town. Because I was only writing horror movies and it was going to be three or four years before I was writing more legitimate movies, not legitimate but bigger budget movies, I wanted to speed up the process. I knew I was going to have about $40,000 together and I wrote a screenplay that we could shoot for that much money. We were able to put the whole cast and crew up for $800—which, on location, is what you usually put one person up for, like one of the grips.

And the living quarters were large enough to shoot in?

We kicked people out of their rooms and we dressed it to look like a living room. We'd shoot at high ceilings that we could bounce light off of. We'd move our equipment from one room to the other rather than taking it out, putting it in a truck, driving to another location. Hardly any of our locations were more than a mile away from where we were staying. The scenes of the stream were right across the street so we just dragged some cable across the street, that kind of thing. And I wrote it that way.

How, specifically, did having the budget first shape the screenplay?

I knew I was going to have non-Screen Actors Guild actors, and all the people I knew that were good, and not in the Guild, were around 30. So it became a movie about turning 30, among other things. I knew I wouldn't have enough time for camera movement or a whole lot of action, so there was going to be a lot of people talking, which is what these people I know do on a weekend. How do I keep the audience's eyes moving? Well, I had a whole bunch of people and made it like *Nashville* where you can always cut away to another little subplot, and it seems to be moving even though the shots are static. The movement then is in the editing and there will be a good reason for editing, as it is so annoying when something cuts and it doesn't need to. We couldn't afford to be moving around to a lot of locations and I was filming in New Hampshire so it became a reunion in New Hampshire with a bunch of people turning 30. Next I say, okay, who are these people? I started to think of peole I knew who were that age and what they were getting into. I had several composites of people I knew and stories or sort of emotional poles that could happen to them in a weekend.

Then you started to draw lines between the characters?

Once I made the characters different enough from one another without making them melodramatic or contrived, then I started saying, who are these people to each other? A couple of them were living together and a couple of them used to live together, and then it just sort of came from that. Specific scenes were originally there for audition purposes. I made this film as an audition piece, so I knew it was going to be a lot of talk and I'd just get offers from soap operas if I don't have some action, so I included the basketball scene and the diving. I tried to think of any location or thing people could do where you could still tell something about the characters, but it should be action. So then I had the action scenes and I had to figure out how to integrate them.

Without upsetting the overall structure.

Exactly. During *Piranha,* they called from Texas where they were shooting and said they can't get a raft. Disney won't give us their Huck Finn raft. Why can't they be going down the river in a houseboat, there's a great houseboat here. Well, if they're in a houseboat, unless the piranha can fly, there's really no danger. So you get used to that. The whole plot of *Piranha* is contrived so

you have to keep it moving fast enough with as little of the contrivance showing as possible. The same thing is true for a movie that wants to do more than just entertain, like a lot of the originals I have written. The nature of film or any kind of writing is that you're contriving to put people together in a certain way. You just try to do it subtly enough so that people don't notice or don't care, one or the other.

In Secaucus Seven, *there doesn't seem to be any one main character. There is a romantic conflict but you seem to be taking an overview of everyone.*

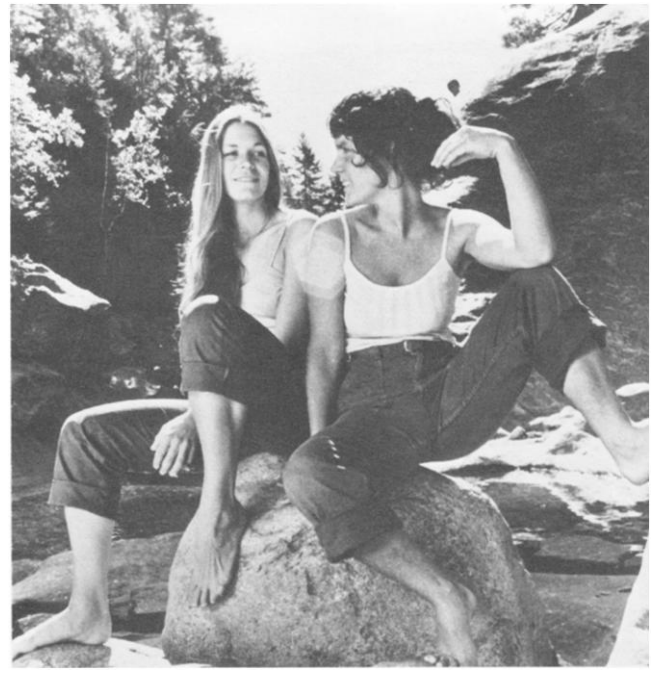
That's a screenplay that I never would have brought to the studios. The only way this movie is going to work is if you believe these people, spend some time with them and feel like you've met them. Some of them are having a more dramatic time than others, but for the others, it's still their lives and important to them, and will become important to the audience if you do it right.

Can Secaucus Seven *be placed into a particular genre of film?*

I think the American equivalent of that is the movies they made during World War II about a bunch of guys going through basic training and then into the army. It really wasn't about one individual. Occasionally, like in *The Big Red One,* there would be a narrator, but he wasn't necessarily the hero; it was about a group of people. That's the only American equivalent I can think of. As I said, I would not have given this script to the studios for that very reason; they would not have been able to accept that point of view. I couldn't have talked anyone into making this movie, which is a good reason to make it.

How much did you vary from the shooting script?

You have to realize that a script is only an outline. Even though there is almost no ad-libbing in the picture, it still is not a living thing until actors come there and make something out of these characters. Each actor is the star of their own movie. In *A Streetcar Named Desire,* there is a little part where the doctor comes at the end and Blanche says, "I've always relied on the kindness of strangers." There's a story that William Redfield tells about meeting the doctor from the original production of *Streetcar,* and he says to him, I hear this play is very good. What's it about? And the doctor says, well, it's about a doctor that comes all the way from Baltimore to help this poor lady. And as far as that actor was concerned, that's what the play was about. He's got a minute on stage, and that is his play.



RETURN OF THE SECAUCUS SEVEN

How has your acting affected your writing?

Because I have acted, I try to look at all the characters that way. How do I play this person? Is the person consistent? Is there some action, something that this character wants, or is it because we just need another body there? If he's just there because they need another body, then you have to give them something that they want, or try to do, or react to.

Once the characters are defined and the interrelationships established, do you ever send them through a traumatic event to show their development and growth?

One way to do that is to set people up beforehand by showing something of their character. Then I think people get satisfaction out of guessing right as to how people are going to react in a certain traumatic event. All the spinoffs of the *Seven Samurai* set up these characters with fairly broad personalities, so when they get into a fight, they say, oh, this is the guy that is good with the knife, and this is the coward, and this is the guy that is this so that basically they do their acting through their fighting. In the samurai movie that I've written, most of the character comes out of descrip-

tions of swordfights. Whether they can do that or not will be interesting to see, but very little of it is actual talking.

Did you use subtitles?

I try to keep it down to a minimum because audiences don't like subtitles. Mostly it's an action, the way the samurai treats this American guy. Sort of like they tried to do in *Shogun*, having the audience be as out as the character was and using the subtitles only when he starts understanding Japanese. These old swordfighters and karate masters don't talk very much. They throw you around and you learn lessons by how hard you get beat up when you do the wrong thing. They lose a lot of their students that way, but that's how they do it.

It sounds like how you learn to be a screenwriter. One last question, do you have any idiosyncracies concerning your writing habits, like when you write, where you write, or whether you have a magic pen?

I write under pressure and everywhere, mostly on airplanes.

BILL NICHOLS

American Gigolo:

Transcendental Style and Narrative Form

All the films Paul Schrader has written, or directed, or both, treat serious themes seriously. They often center on a quest, a goal pursued to the point of monomania. Schrader's central characters go too far; they exceed the limits of convention, normalcy, or law. Something drives them on. Whether in *The Yakuza, Hard Core, Taxi Driver, Blue Collar, Obsession, Rolling Thunder, American Gigolo* or *Raging Bull* the central character's *idée fixe* pushes him toward a point perilously close to the bounds of sanity, a point well beyond the limits within which most of us choose to live. His films, in fact, seem like a series of variations on John Ford's *The Searchers*, itself a film which clearly questions the tradition of the heroic odyssey. In *American Gigolo* more than any of Schrader's other work, that odyssey is spiritual; but here as elsewhere, what draws our interest is the sense of characters going to extremes. They set up a palpable movement, a dizzying, tightening spiral of logic and self-justifying premises driving toward some obscure but dangerous destiny. The mad mixture of determination and jealousy embodied by Jake La Motta in *Raging Bull* exemplifies the emotional heat of this movement most insistently, just as the solitary preparations for combat of Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver* best exemplify the increasingly nightmarish, isolated world of the demented seeker.

The main character of *American Gigolo* (Julian Kay, played by Richard Gere), sets out on what seems, by contrast, a remarkably reasonable quest —to clear himself of suspicion of murder—but this is placed within the context of a life revolving around another goal apparently no less extreme than that of these other heroes: the reduction of human intimacy to the level of a business transaction. The gigolo hero provides women with what they need, taking his pleasure, as any decent merchant might, in knowing that the commodity he sells (himself) is of superior quality, and claims his own emotional needs do not exceed this commercial equation. *American Gigolo*, though, attempts to demonstrate that there are, indeed, other needs unmet, spiritual needs most of all, that the hero himself must in the end come to acknowledge. This rupture of the limitations of a tightening coil of false assumptions distinguishes *Gigolo* from Schrader's other films where characters persist in the mono-planar pursuit of their obsessions to inevitable, and destructive, conclusions. *American Gigolo*, by contrast, provides for a transcendental moment of self-awareness, conversion, grace. The formal or stylistic terms within which this movement occurs, however, establish crucial constraints on how we read the film thematically.

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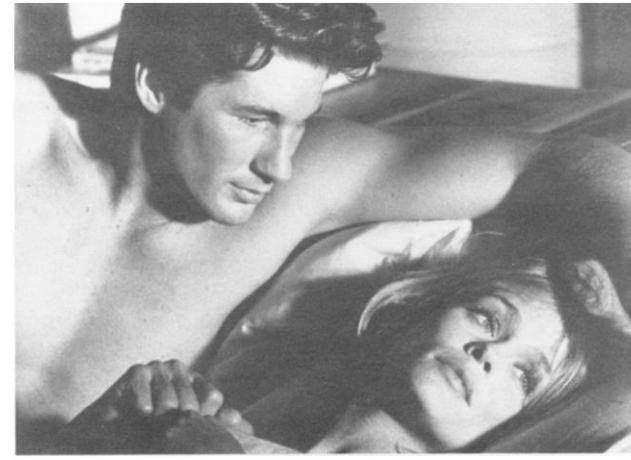
AMERICAN GIGOLO

Generically, *American Gigolo* shares a number of qualities with *film noir* and with the samurai film. Stylistically, *Gigolo* draws heavily upon the transcendental style and narrative structure of the films of Ozu and Bresson. (It also borrows scenes, motifs, and situations from a host of other films, from *Scorpio Rising* to *Saboteur*—detailing them would make another article.) *Gigolo*'s relationship to Bresson's work and Schrader's interpretation of it in a book he published several years ago are what I want to explore most thoroughly.

Briefly, though, we might first notice that Julian Kay shares something of the existential ethos embodied by *film noir* heroes. Like them he lives in a world characterized by instrumental maneuvering. Like them he is set apart by his own code of conduct that will brook no transgression. And like them he finds that it is love that leads the way back toward collectivity, that love serves as an avenue of possible redemption from the corruption of the marketplace and those who have internalized its values. In *film noir,* though, this love is the brighter side of a single coin: the good-bad girl, for example, appears to embody both love and deception and brings some measure of hope to relations within the everyday world. Julian's acknowledgement of his love for Michele (Lauren Hutton), however, offers not so much an extra resource in his everyday struggles, but opens up the possibility of a spiritual dimension to life wholly apart from his gigolo environment. In *American Gigolo,* love can be seen not only as the (dubious) sanctuary of the private against the corrosiveness of the public, as it is in *noir,* but also as a pathway leading to the transcendence of this real, material realm altogether. Perhaps, unlike fifties gigolo Joe Gillis in *Sunset Boulevard,* Julian Kay will find that there is an exit, an alternative to the corruption (of feeling as much as anything) in which he's become immersed. This would appear to be Schrader's central theme and it is a point to which we will return.

Julian Kay's cool self-sufficiency borrows from the samurai tradition as well as *noir. American Gigolo,* like Melville's *Le Samurai* and Winner's *The Mechanic,* transposes the world of the ronin (masterless) samurai to the modern, western world. Hit man and gigolo, like the *noir* detective hero, cannot afford involvement although, like the ronin samurai, they have a rigid code of ethics to uphold.



Richard Gere and Lauren Hutton: AMERICAN GIGOLO

Their loyalty and services (once purchased) are given with total dedication, and the nihilist spirit with which they overcome impediments (carried to an extreme in Misumi's *Sword of Vengeance* series) remains, in fact, anchored to a contracted loyalty. Julian embraces the ethical principles of the man who seeks to act correctly more than to enjoy himself, who guards against losing self-control (through exploitation, manipulation or "possession" by another), who values ascetic discipline as a way of life, whose pleasure derives from integrity—from obligations dutifully fulfilled. (In this he also shares qualities embodied by the ascetic heroes of Schrader's other work: discipline, in all these cases, is obsession's other name.) Much of *American Gigolo*'s fascination derives from the relentlessness with which a warped objective is pursued. Self-mortification, denial, dedication—they mark the man of greatness (and of madness) in cultures such as ours or feudal Japan's. Much more than most samurai films, *American Gigolo* opens up the psychopathic edge to an ethics no longer firmly anchored to a timeless first principle but instead built on discipline, denial, and services that can be bought and sold. In Julian's case, perhaps it is the proximity of his apparently idiosyncratic ethics to those that underpin the Puritanism surrounding us which provides an additional element of resonance. Dedication, commitment, service—they become misplaced. Lofty goals are replaced by lesser ones. We expect, and dread, a terrible reckoning. *American Gigolo* moves down this avenue only, in the end, to reverse itself. Here, the film and its style move us toward the transcendental and the models of Ozu and Bresson.

In his book *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu,*

Bresson, Dreyer (University of California Press, 1972), Paul Schrader develops a cross-cultural formula by means of which the transcendent may be expressed in film. He describes three moments of paramount importance: (1) Considerable attention to simple details of everyday life, *le quotidien.* (2) A sense of disparity that gradually emerges. We experience a sense of mystery, of explanatory inadequacy, within the everyday: something more is demanded but relentlessly withheld. This emerging disparity culminates in a decisive action by the hero that demands commitment from the viewer. (Examples are the declaration of love by Julian at the end of *American Gigolo;* the same declaration by Michel in Bresson's *Pickpocket,* "How long it has taken me to come to you"; the priest's death in *Diary of a Country Priest;* Hirayama's weeping at the end of Ozu's *An Autumn Afternoon.*) (3) Stasis, a literal freezing of the action after the decisive moment, a formal strategy that resolves the experience of disparity by prompting us to go beyond the everyday. The viewer's only alternative is to reject the action and its following stasis as outlandish, inexplicable, a violation of what everyday expectations would allow. Stasis calls for faith. The static view of the everyday which we are given cannot contain our emotion, it leads us to place it elsewhere. Something remains unseen. The images have not told all. Examples Schrader cites are the final codas at the end of Ozu's films. In Bresson it is the closing shot, suggesting oneness to all things: the shadow of the cross in *Diary of a Country Priest,* Michel's imprisoned face in *Pickpocket* (repeated in *Gigolo*), the dark street down which the hero disappears in *A Man Escaped.*

To provide a sense of disparity transcendental style must remove what Schrader calls "screens"—those means of involving the viewer emotionally and psychologically in specific situations and individual characters which most films depend on. These are largely the tactics of psychological realism and its expressive instruments of camera movement, musical accompaniment, classical editing, and so on. Bresson, for example, undermines suspense, strips characters of psychological density, demands automatic, non-expressive acting, relies on static, mainly frontal camera work, minimizes music, stresses everyday sounds, and enforces a deadpan, non-dramatic editing rhythm.

Schrader goes on to argue that such removal of screens is never total. A tension persists. He calls this a tension between "sparse" means—which give the sense of disparity, refuse to provide satisfactory explanations, prompt us beyond the everyday— and "abundant" means—which give a sense of empathy for characters, work to hold an audience before the screen, fabricate a plausible imaginary realm within which we expect to find satisfying resolution at story's end. (If abundant means alone compel our leap, we have the "religious" film, *The Ten Commandments,* for example, and its cinematic "miracles"; if sparse means dominate from the outset, we have the structural film, *Wavelength,* for example, and its failure to involve us via the human vessel for what lies beyond.) In Bresson and Ozu, Schrader's abundant means succumb to sparse ones, epitomized by the moment of stasis. The hero's conduct, especially his "decisive act," remains enigmatic and the moment of stasis supersedes the richer, more abundant elements that served to draw us into the film's narrative world. As a result, the story's grounding in the everyday fails to prove adequate. It does not provide the satisfaction of a coherent, explainable narrative resolution. We must leap to higher ground, as the moment of stasis invites, or reject the mechanism at work entirely. Schrader sees no middle ground between discovering grace and spiritual transcendence and the lack of grace that traps us within the material confines of the everyday. Whether *American Gigolo* also provides no alternative reading is a question we must examine further.

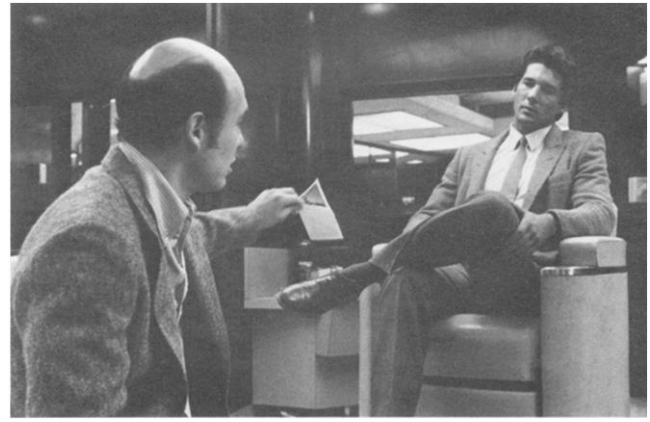
American Gigolo seems consciously patterned after the three-moment formula for transcendental style which Schrader outlines in his book, with Bresson as the chief mentor even though the balance between abundant and sparse means is clearly different from Bresson's. (Three successive static shots of Julian's apartment and of Westwood, where he lives, clearly echo Ozu's codas but seem essentially gratuitous given the strongly expressive camera style that dominates generally.) The film searches for another balance in keeping with its own time and place. The risk of over-sparseness (boredom) remains, but far less blatantly. Whether the expression of the transcendent also survives is another question.

Unlike *Pickpocket* and other Bresson films, *American Gigolo* does not deemphasize several of

the screens nontranscendental styles utilize to convey their meaning. Instead it reserves much of its sparseness for the ending. There is, for example, the matter of choosing stars, Gere and Hutton, in contrast to unknown non-actors, as well as the invention of many clever pieces of business that help draw us into Julian's everyday world. (Many of these play off familiar, and often objectionable, stereotypes: the black as gangster-pimp; the tone of blatant homophobia and the sensationalization of gay nightlife in terms of S&M bars; the ruthless, "liberal" politician; the politician's bumbling aide-turned-spy; the clever, probing detective whose game of wits with Julian provides considerable involvement; the jaded, self-centered attitudes of the clients Julian services.)

Likewise, other screens experience only partial erosion. It is hard to imagine any transcendental impulse, initially, for example, when we follow Julian on a buying spree to the vibrant beat of Blondie's "Call Me." But popular music and flashy images continue throughout the film (until the "decisive action"). In fact, *Gigolo*'s camera style seems to owe far more to Bertolucci than to the quiet, simple style of Ozu and Bresson. Tracking shots abound. They exude power, authority, a rapture between camera and subject that seems altogether earthly. (Godard's lateral tracking shots pose a more controlled and critical contrast to Bertolucci's, and seem to suggest a sensibility of Puritan denial similar to Schrader's, but *Gigolo* exhibits none of the desire to expose the materialist underpinnings to phenomena that we find in Godard, at least on first examination.) And again, abatement is not seen until the very end: Schrader's camera glides and cranes and probes, right up to the climatic death of Leon, the villain who frames Julian.

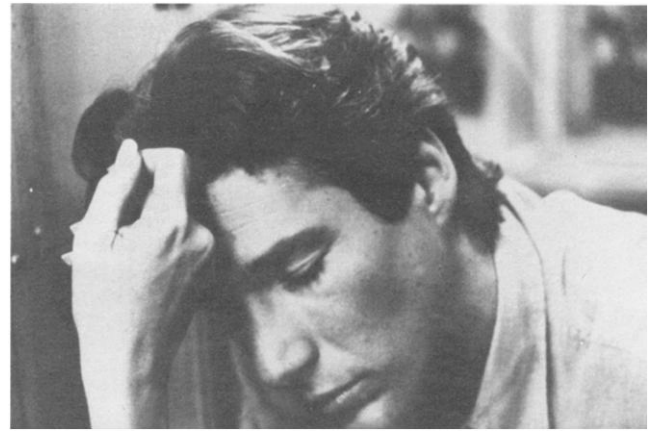
The acting is not deadpan (though for a man who trades in pleasure, Julian is certainly guarded), the dialogue is engaging (Julian, for example, creates pandemonium at a police line-up by confiding to another suspect that he, Julian, had been paid for his co-operation); for the most part the editing forges the traditional pattern of psychological continuity found in so-called classical films. The shift from sparseness toward abundance is clearly substantial. Disparity grows more from the premises (how long and to what degree can a man uphold a code of self-denial in the midst of awe-



"Screens": the probing detective

some pleasures and, with Michele, genuine concern?) than from the style. This flattens "disparity" into dramatic tension rather than a sense of another realm unexhausted by the everyday. (In Schrader's own terms, any gradually emerging sense of disparity is almost nonexistent.) The resulting shift from the formula for transcendence Schrader works out for Ozu, Bresson and Dreyer has appreciable consequences for the film's ending and its decisive action.

In traditional narrative and Hollywood terms *American Gigolo* has an ostensibly "happy ending." The dilemmas revealed within the fictional realm (the arena of the everyday and its screens in Schrader's terms) find resolution: Julian is absolved of guilt and makes the decisive act of declaring his love. But something is still amiss—as it should be in a transcendental scheme. Paradox and contradiction do not disappear beneath the pleasure of a tidy resolution entirely. Instead the ending's style engenders further paradox. The style becomes suddenly sparse or laconic. Static long takes are interspersed with fades to white, Julian's declaration of love for Michele is



AMERICAN GIGOLO: *The Bressonian ending* ▶

perplexingly sudden. But what is particularly interesting here is that this lack of total resolution within the terms of classical narrative is a criterion not only for transcendental style but for ideological contestation as well. "Disparity," though truly present at the film's conclusion, offers more than one possible meaning.

For either a Marxist or a transcendentalist, a satisfying resolution in the face of irresolvable contradiction is extremely problematic. Contradictions, in fact, remain in the real, material world, or between this world and that transcendent realm beyond. To allow tensions to be resolved is to provide false contentment, artificial satisfaction. The narrative needs to point beyond—for a Marxist, to those contradictions which, since they are real, remain, and require change in the real world; for a Christian, like Bresson, or perhaps Schrader, to those contradictions which, since they defy logic and commonsense, we must embrace with faith. An ending may be happy but, as with *American Gigolo*, not on all levels. However much it resolves, something more, some excess, must remain unresolved.

American Gigolo's ending, though ostensibly "happy," clearly leaves a sense of excess. In terms of Schrader's analysis of transcendental style, *Gigolo*'s ending contains both the decisive action and the stasis that should move us to an act of faith, to a discovery of the excess beyond the everyday: the transcendent. It is clearly at odds with the previously established, abundant style. The question then becomes whether this form of ending points to the transcendent for which a sparse style like Bresson's prepares us, or back toward those material conditions in which Schrader's more abundant style has immersed us.

Now, in traditional terms the unprepared-for stylistic change and seemingly gratuitous resolution to *American Gigolo* would be ascribed to systemic constraints ("Hollywood made me do it," as von Sternberg may have been wont to say of the family reunion grafted onto the end of *Blonde Venus*), or to a subversive style. With *American Gigolo* we have no indication the ending was imposed over the objections of the director. (As we've seen, Julian's conversion actually fits neatly into Schrader's formulaic scheme.) Nor does subversion seem to be the point. If *Gigolo*'s ending were the product of a subversive style, its unprepared-for quality should remind us of the reality of the contradictions the film presents and the impossibility of their resolution—without altering everyday or material reality rather than transcending it. The films of Douglas Sirk, for example, explore this tactic where a patently contrived, *deus ex machina* ending ties things up so swiftly and neatly that resolution seems far more artificial than the contradictions which preceded it.

Ironically, a Sirkian reading of *American Gigolo* seems reasonably well warranted; after all, its decisive act and stasis are only another, perhaps more literal form of *deus ex machina*. But such a reading runs counter to Schrader's transcendental formula as he develops it in his book. Our experience of Julian as a man incapable of feeling, bent on self-denial and the pleasing ego games of willful self-control, is not easily dispelled: an unprepared-for ending reminds us that the real, material conditions prompting such contradictions also lack genuine resolution. And Schrader's stress on abundant means gives added weight to this reminder in contrast to the films of Ozu and Bresson where our interest in material conditions is considerably reduced by a very different balance between abundant and sparse means throughout the films. (Conversely, Schrader's failure to develop a sparse style and a gradually emerging sense of disparity may be a strong indication that such a style is indeed a vital part of any transcendental formula.) With *American Gigolo*, we expect resolution to come within Julian's everyday realm, the one in which we have been immersed. When it does not (due to the discrepant style of the ending), this points to the genuine impossibility of resolving the dilemma of Julian's self-contradictory nature within the context in which it arises because of the self-contradictory nature of that real, material context.

It is perhaps more than ironic that *American Gigolo* thus supports a reading strictly counter to the one Schrader's formula proposes. Schrader's recourse to abundant means, like Sirk's use of melodrama, certainly encourages this inversion of a transcendental ending, this return to material conditions. Ambivalence, or the tendencies of ideology to open cracks and fissures in a text, are certainly harder to find in Bresson, and perhaps Ozu. Bresson's work seems, from premise to conclusion, in style and content, to function in a spir-

itual or transcendent domain. Criticism of that view remains primarily external rather than embedded in it, but Schrader brings this criticism inside his work, as a flaw or gap between the ideology he appears to endorse (the quietism of a transcendental, mysterious grace) and the overall style and structure of the film which consequently operates as a form of internal criticism.

The limitations of *American Gigolo,* then, may stem from Schrader's failure to apply his own formula effectively, which assumes a level of conscious authorial intention that leads us, I suspect, into a critical *cul de sac;* or these limitations may stem from a pattern of textual organization (regardless of how it got there) that does, indeed, authorize a materialist over an idealist reading. I have compared *Gigolo*'s structure to Schrader's blueprint for transcendental style throughout, but must also insist that this parallelism cannot be taken as a given; something gets lost in translation, and that "something" is precisely the autonomy of a textual system, the film's own process of signification in contrast to an author's presumed intentions. The question is not the effective application of a formula for a transcendental style (which Schrader himself, in his book at least, warns cannot be applied mechanically), but the effect of those stylistic differences that distinguish one film from another, despite overall similarities. This returns the notion of the transcendent to material conditions; of culture and personality, to varying extent, of textual organization most certainly. (And in no case should the transcendent be equated with the spiritual, which may just as readily be imminent.) The abundant means of *American Gigolo,* its retention, to a large degree, of "screens," the perhaps overly mechanical reliance on a formula, especially in the "decisive action" and stasis that end the film, the numerous borrowings from films and film traditions—these inflect *Gigolo* in a distinctive way. They suggest, together with Schrader's other work, that he may be better equipped to convey a powerful sense of the paradoxes facing the solitary hero who stands above the need for the gifts of others, the defiant man of willful self-control, that ghostly ruin of an ideal plagued by his dark nemesis—the alcoholic, the loser, the gentle altruist—than he is capable of giving expression to the transcendent. Paul Schrader as a writer-director assigned authorial responsibility for certain filmic texts may be far more a materialist than the Paul Schrader who wrote *Transcendental Style* just as the John Ford who celebrated America was quite a different director from the John Ford ferreted out by the *Cahiers* editors in their *Young Mr. Lincoln* article). And what is most intriguing is not the possibility of placing Schrader squarely in either camp, but of teasing out the (contradictory) tension between material conditions and transcendental resolutions to which he gives compelling expression.

A POSTCRIPT FROM PAUL SCHRADER

I have chosen to believe that my current work as a writer and director and my previous work as a critic have nothing in common. This doesn't mean they have nothing in common; it means I've chosen to believe they don't.

This is more than a semantic distinction. Criticism deals with cadavers; film-making with fetuses. A writer must not prejudge an idea struggling to be born—even if it violates his critical principles. The moment a film-maker fixes his own "style" he dies as an artist.

For this reason I had no qualms about lifting the end of *Pickpocket* for *American Gigolo.* My circumstances are so different from Bresson's that plagiarism is out of the question. I could remake *Pickpocket* shot for shot and not plagiarize Bresson. As Nichols points out, the style of *American Gigolo* stands in direct contrast to its *Pickpocket* ending.

I don't know what this means. I don't want to. Perhaps my "style" will be a permanent and contradictory tension. Perhaps it is moving toward a harmony as yet unknown to me. Perhaps it will lose even the value of this tension.

I suspect this is the attitude of every film-maker. When I interviewed Bresson several years ago, I was surprised to discover he had a fluid and prismatic view of his—in my view—doctrinaire style. It is left to others to discover whatever style a film-maker has. Perhaps this is why I find I am no longer able to write objective criticism.

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KAREN JAEHNE

Rehabilitating the Superfluous Man

THE FILMS IN THE LIFE OF NIKITA MIKHALKOV

Some Days in the Life of Ilya Oblomov has established the reputation of Nikita Mikhalkov as a director to know, although he has become used to being introduced as the younger brother of Andrey Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky. There is no reason, however, to stop at that relation: his father, Sergey Mikhalkov, is a dramatist; his mother is writer Natalkia Konchalovsky; he is the grandson of the painter Piotr Konchalovsky and great-grandson of painter Vasili Konchalovsky. In keeping with family tradition, he studied acting at the Chukshin School for Theater in Moscow, after which he became a student of Mikhail Romm from 1966 to 1971, studying directing at the Moscow Film School. He has pursued parallel careers as an actor and director, acting in 20 films including the lead in his brother's recent epic *Siberiade.* When he himself turned to film-making in 1975, he made films not revolutionary in character, but about the revolution.

In his debut film, *At Home Among Strangers, Stranger at Home,* Mikhalkov himself played a mounted revolutionary in a Soviet shoot-em-up of Western dimensions. Gold destined for Moscow to buy wheat is taken by bandits from a train, and one of the guards is suspected of being involved —in other words, treason! This young man goes undercover to infiltrate the gang of thieves who stole it and thus prove his innocence, although his reputation will have been restored independently by the good will and friendship of his faithful Civil War comrades. A good deal of horseback riding, gun-slinging and fast cutting certify Mikhalkov's technical ability, but most significant is the beginning of his team work with cameraman Pavel Lebeshev.

His second and best-known film, *Slave of Love (Raba Ljubwi,* 1976), is not just another film about film-making, where a director takes the opportunity of exploring his medium to explore himself. Mikhalkov's subject matter is the silents—an enterprise as feverish as the revolution for which it provides a parallel. In 1919, two years and a ten-day train ride from Bolshevik Moscow, a film crew works on a new melodrama somewhat desultorily, as they await Maxakov, their great silent star from Moscow, not to mention a shipment of celluloid, for it seems that the Bolsheviks are confiscating film. The characters are typical of the period and the genre—caricatures of the glamorous new medium. The director is obsessed with eating, as much as with his reputation as a director and with his glamorous vedette, Olga. She is a coquette, who in her heart knows it's wrong to be whiling away the revolution in Odessa while Maxakov remains in Moscow faithful to Mother Russia, making statements that somehow betray an anachronistic Soviet awareness: "Uncle Vanya wants you" things about cultural commitment to the prevailing ideology. The torpor of late summer and futile dreams has hit the film crew, all except for the writer whose love-poetry for the titles is too ambitious for this particular silent. The cameraman, Victor Potozkin, is a Bolshevik agent, a romantic figure who entertains the star by driving her around the countryside in a vintage horseless carriage. To complete such a cast, the director must resort to a male lead who is lounging in the cafés on the Black Sea, out of cowardice and out of work, with floppy wrists and a treble voice that become part of the myth of obsolescence accompanying the arrival of the talkies and the advent of apocalyptic politics.

Slave of Love opens with a silent by the same name: the hero has just been caught by his wife kissing the heroine in some triangle of bourgeois decadence when a chase scene begins in the theater itself. Uniformed men capture a member of the audience, ignoring his protests that he is just another cineaste who wants to see the film to the end. He is tossed like a corpse into the back of a truck and carried away. The seriousness of the situation belies the effect of this Keystone Cops sequence. It slowly becomes clear that we are in

AT HOME AMONG STRANGERS

southern Russia where General Dinekin's White Russian troops are clinging to power.

Subsequent sequences show the film industry in exile, going on about its crazy business before the camera runs out of stock. Mikhalkov transports us into the "finished product": black-and-white passion plays of the times, with an occasional technician or director invading the frame. But these ragtag productions do transmit some of the euphoria of the era, of the commitment of a few people to make films which look as zany and ephemeral as many thought the revolution would be. What is particularly striking about this equation of silent film-making with the making of a revolution is the improvisation of the *mise-en-scène.* The directors shouting through their megaphones at the actors to fall down dead before the film runs out offer scenes no less realistic than the long-shot on the town square when Potozkin is murdered after a romantic interlude with Olga.

Mikhalkov's vision of the revolution in 1919–20, behind the White lines, has a spiritual rather than political emphasis. The political details are surely known to a Soviet audience, but we outsiders are given to understand only that under the (mis-) guidance of General Dinekin, the Whites indulge in summary executions, arrests, and intimidation tactics—which only serve to unite the opposition. An officer who regularly visits the film set for inquiries is such a corrupt character that his search and seizure of the incriminating film is stymied by a fairly obvious trick. Improvising with her real-life role as mother of Russian cherubim, Olga removes a reel from the car to the baby carriage. Cameraman Potozkin also "play-acts" a drunken binge to escape suspicion and to enlist Olga's aid in rescuing his film. Thus their revolutionary activities have the same thespian hue as their other labors.

Olga the Star is exemplary of the Russians who fled Moscow: not out of cowardice, or antagonism toward the Bolsheviks, but rather out of ignorance or naïveté. That Olga cannot rise above her own stardom is demonstrated in one of several scenes where she and the cameraman bounce along a dusty road on their daily outing, he discussing politics and the affairs of men, she the affairs of women. In a capricious gesture, Olga rushes from the car toward a cinema where people are lined up to see her latest film *Slave of Love.* She admonishes them not to waste their time in such nonrevolutionary pleasures, only to be overwhelmed by their requests for autographs and their equal pleasure in drowning her in bouquets. Olga returns to the car once more the secure, beloved star. Nevertheless, Victor Potozkin includes her in a middle-of-the-night screening of his latest footage of White atrocities, to which she comes veiled like Mata Hari (nobody told her what role to play).

As a slave of love she is drafted into the revolutionary theater as a willing servant; she must complete Potozkin's mission. Upon his death she attempts to turn the film over to someone she knows to be his comrade. Accusing him of cowardice for not "recognizing" her, she turns in tears back to the set, where she soberly waits for the cameras to roll on the final scenes of their film. The director wails, "This will be my worst film," checks his limited footage, his decimated crew, takes one last snort, and the action begins. We see the grainy stock of a melodrama of a fallen woman's suicide, when suddenly Olga actually shoots the White officer who is once more inspecting the set, looking for the films of atrocities being used as propaganda in Moscow against the Whites. His droll contempt turns to rage; the scene turns to a massacre. Olga is whisked away by Potozkin's comrades who now trust her and put her aboard a trolley with instructions, "Get her out of here. She is a famous film star and has just shot the commissar." (Jane Fonda, eat your heart out.) The trolley conductor flees, betraying the "Bolshevik terrorist" to a group of mounted Whites. There ensues a classic Western chase, the train tracks curving off into the horizon at the right, the heroine alone inside an empty car, horsemen chasing her, shouting and shooting, soft focus on her

innocent, bewildered face. If the above description is not interpretive enough, let it be said that the last romantic star fades into the yellow dust, into the future of politicized films.

Slave of Love maintains a precarious balance between romantic comedy and travesty, between revolutionary tragedy and farce, between nostalgia and tribute. This equilibrium depends to a great degree on Mikhalkov's use of close-ups, cutting quickly from pans of idyllic Russian landscapes to facial expressions invoking Eisenstein. An actor himself, Nikita Mikhalkov has explained his becoming a director as the result of acting in too many bad films, and it is indeed the actors who carry his own films beyond the clichés of popular cinema and give human depth and irony—à la Renoir—to the all-too-human situation comedy. For example, when Olga confesses her love to Victor, he seems slightly embarrassed, since his "gift" on the table is contraband; impatient for her to end her dramatic monologue, he accepts her love and enlists her aid. Greater love hath no revolutionary!

The "naturalistic" tragedy of the struggle finds its appropriate medium in the rough cuts shot secretly by Potozkin, including footage of the opening scene of the film: the body of a "Bolshevik" ruthlessly tossed onto a truck-bed, after which our veiled star slinks by in shock, having seen realism for the first time in her life, and that on the screen! Without so much as stroking the touchstone of realism, Mikhalkov recreates the necessity of film as a pedagogical medium. That celluloid can become a document or witness seems to be a discovery of major proportions within the film and provides sustenance to his marzipan recreation of the lives of meandering movie-makers. Unlike *Traveling Players*, no popular folk tradition—either within the polite fiction of the plot or the not-so-polite history of Soviet cinema—guarantees ideological support for the "myth" or melodrama enacted in the film within the film. There is too much revolution in the air, not enough in the art, until Olga infuses a bit of *cinéma vérité* into the finale, rendered traditionally theatrical in her escape.

The stylized shift to flickering features achieves two contradictory effects. Olga's murder of the inspector seems less out of character because it is framed within the conventions of her *métier*. Simultaneously, however, it seems more of a gesture than a revolutionary act, as long as it is in character for our vedette. The bronze cast of the murder scene must be related back to the propaganda about atrocities, albeit atrocities committed by and not against the commissar, and thus not in the established character of previous uses of documentary footage. The shift endows the scene with a relatively realistic historicism that satisfies the viewer's need for a materialistic revolutionary response to the attempt to equate revolution and silent cinema.

Mikhalkov can be droll about his homage. As the director prepares for a tragic conclusion to this saga, muttering about October having always brought him disaster, a wave of nostalgia for those simple, silent days gives way to horror, as we realize the end of the stock ran out during Olga's *ad hoc* shoot-up on the scene, and the film must remain unfinished. Without camp or slapstick, Mikhalkov pays tribute to "those wonderful men with their cranks" in a narrative far more subtle than Jiri Menzel's Czech film about the beginnings of movie-making.

The self-reflection of a director-*cum*-actor is bound to have a certain theatrical panache to it, and *Unfinished Piece For a Player Piano* is a vehicle for actors—not for a star, but for at least six actors capable of Chekhovian inconsistency. Chekhov's portraits of neurotic failures in a collapsing culture make him seem more modern to us than many a contemporary Soviet screenwriter. By adapting *Unfinished Piece*, for the most part, from Chekhov's "Platonov," Mikhalkov has managed to project a twentieth-century malaise onto the Soviet screen, whereas this sort of thing is usually associated with late Woody Allen or the social satire of Volker Schlöndorff or Claude Chabrol. "At what price whimsy?" is the question that motivates the film, and it hangs in the cinema long after the last frame. The breath of life in any portrayal of the whimsical perforce betrays a sympathy with a certain complacent decadence that is the last-ditch defense mechanism of a society declining to a fall. Mikhalkov's historical perspective graciously permits 20/20 hindsight on the eve of destruction; his characters all suffer from spiritual failure, but

SLAVE OF LOVE: *Early film-making, Russian style*

they give their utmost to hinder its advance into the stages of social failure.

Enacting the rituals of a bankrupt class consciousness, a disorderly procession of guests is welcomed to the mortgaged estate of a General's widow, whose son Sasha, played by Nikita Mikhalkov himself, keeps tally on them through a spyglass. Emphasis is given to his voyeurism by reducing our view to a circular frame whenever a new guest lurches into view, and as it finds inevitably a lugubrious point of view, it acquires the air of a toy—and this young man awaiting his new bride acquires the air of a child. Very delicately Mikhalkov establishes a metaphor of "playing"—with toys, games, roles—as a bridge between the characters' isolation and their herd instinct. The absurdity of games reaches a climax when a neighbor imitates the "King of the Forest" with his cretinous twin daughters entwining their arms as antlers above his head, while he howls like a mating moose. (His claims to aristocratic breeding are the least dubious of the group, we are informed in an aside.) "We have a European culture, but Asiatic manners," said Chekhov, and Mikhalkov gives it credibility.

Earnest game-playing begins when Sophia, the new bride, is reintroduced to her lover of a decade past, the now fat Platonov, who becomes aggressive at Sophia's barely concealed disappointment. As the camera records the shocked faces and scandalized mien of the party, we hear his cynical greeting until he reverses his diatribe, accusing the rest of them of having no sense of humor. Meanwhile, the camera repeatedly cuts back to Sophia dropping flowers from her bouquet. Thus the group is bound together by their mutual disapproval, given expression in long takes uniting their disparate tempers. Yeleni Solovei plays Sophia with the disarming naïveté of Diane Keaton's Annie Hall, surrounded by characters bedevilled by passions and simultaneous doubts about those passions, so thoroughly absorbed in themselves as to remain spiritual deaf-mutes to others' passions.

Desires are hinted at only in their play, sometimes as confession, otherwise as malicious one-upsmanship. During an afternoon siesta, Sophia finds herself in a closet with Platonov, playing hide-and-seek with their hostess, the claustrophobia of their situation emphasized by a slight fish-eye lengthening of the shots of their only escape route through the hall. This entrapped situation reflects the passion they once felt, as well as the *cul-de-sac* fantasy of their "escape."

In another game, to escape from the rain, they have all gathered on the sun-porch to draw cards

and match them up for a favor from their hostess-dealer. The widow promises to kiss "the knave," the possessor of which happens to be Platonov, her erstwhile lover. An elderly gentleman aspiring to that position offers to buy Platonov's card. "It's not for sale," cries the indebted widow, and the poor old man abandons the room, humiliated. Because he is the only one to have preserved a modicum of decorum, the subsequent scene is painfully effective. Outside, he approaches the sun-room windows; the camera focuses through the window on his figure in the rain; then from outside the rain-splashed windows the depth of focus is readjusted to the rain itself on the glass as a symbolic shedding of tears. The tragicomedy inside blurs, as our point of view becomes his. This kind of ambivalence is typical of Mikhalkov's indication of shifts in mood and character of an entire social class, whose folly is never made so clearly a question of class as when seen through the eyes of a village lad who observes them dancing, asking ever so politely if this be witchcraft.

Their most serious commitments are reduced to games, amusements as a form of social identity. The doctor refuses to answer a summons, bewailing the long ride in bad weather to visit a dirty peasant who can't be helped anyway. Although Sophia and Sasha share a vision of utopian social welfare, they want to initiate reform by giving the peasants their old clothes, tails and silks to help them bring in the sheaves in style. Actions that defy common sense rest on the sole defense of good intentions, and Mikhalkov shows how flimsy it is. In the final sequence, good intentions serve egocentricity and insensitivity. All night, Sophia has awaited Platonov in the garden in order to inform him that she is ready to abandon social convention and run away with him so that they can fulfill their earlier visions of a brave new world; all this we see and hear, while a door-handle rattles in the background. When the camera finally turns on the door-rattler, it is Platonov fumbling to get inside and away from Sophia's sincerity. Once inside the villa, he awakens the party to curse them, before resorting to suicide in the most dead-pan scene in cinema. In the muggy dawn he throws himself in the river, but nowhere is it deep enough, and knee-deep in his own misery, he allows himself to be rescued by his wife, whose consolation claims the final line: "Everything will be all right, it will be as it always was," and she leads him back to where all is surely regressing to normal.

Chekhov had no ideological basis from which to exercise his social critique, but Mikhalkov, even with the running dogs of Marxism and Leninism to guide him, still avoids the sand-traps of ideology found in the dialogue and plot development of most popular Soviet films. These aristocrats and *nouveau riche* bourgeois are created as sympathetic reflections of many a modern neurosis; the plot is a comedy of foibles, worthy of a tribute to Chekhov, even without the historical setting.

The inspiration for the film, the player piano, is industrially revolutionary, occasioning amusement and amazement that any instrument could be so self-reliant. Initially the party refuses to believe that the barefoot peasant, who delivers the piano and mimics a concert pianist, is capable of such "art." Their credibility seems less strained at the idea of the piano playing itself: better a ghost in the machine than the muse in the masses. They continue to be delighted by the piano's sputtering forth the coming ideology of a mechanical universe where the music of the spheres is caged in a jukebox.

Mikhalkov's next project moved forward half a century without losing the nostalgia endemic in all his pictures. *Five Evenings (Pyat Vecherov)* is a film version of the play by Alexandr Volodin, first produced in 1960, not far removed from its fictive date, 1956, the year of the 20th Party Congress as well—in other words, a year of great promise that guaranteed a certain effect on every Soviet citizen. Mikhalkov's filming of the play, some 18 years later, is necessarily fraught with an even more complicated nostalgia than usual, since both events—the fictive and the actual performance—lie within scope of his memory, and he seems to inject a disappointment and frustration, however understated, in this story of a man and a woman becoming reacquainted after a great lapse of time and confidence.

In some large Soviet city, a man "wearing a hat" (Mikhalkov notes this) is visiting a twit of a girl who embodies what is desperately fashionable. Exasperated with her and desperate himself for the past rather than the present, he promises to return

in 15 minutes after a visit across the street. The unkept promise provides a frame for the story, since he doesn't return for five days, during which he visits Tamara Vassilyevna, a woman he hurt very deeply to judge from her civil but cool reception. Yes, he may spend the night at her flat, in a room with her nephew whom she is trying to raise to an age of responsibility and respect; the boy is a student and she works, so "life is rather dull," she informs him, dressed in robe and hair rollers. Contrary to this promise, their daily routines prove rather interesting to Ilyin Ilyitch, who seems determined to overcome her bitterness and to compensate for the 15 years since he last saw her. He takes his hat off, seems to make himself at home, and appears years younger and happier. Even the lighting is warmer.

Tamara seems frustrated by the overly simplified transitions that have occurred in the name of progress, while Ilyin represents to her the possibility of even more social stagnation. She has become paralyzed by her responsibilities (she supervises 80 workers at a factory), by her moral sensibility (she scolds her nephew's girlfriend for keeping late hours), by her expectations of a utopian future (Ilyin claims to be the chief engineer in a factory in order not to disappoint her), and the diminishing returns of self-sacrifice. For example, a generation gap is demonstrated in one of the first scenes where her two commitments, to a socialist society and to raising her nephew, appear incompatible: when she quotes to the nephew from Lenin's letters, he accuses her of being an ideologue. That he should lack respect for such hidebound ideology is a sleight-of-hand signal of his viability and flexibility, on the one hand, but on the other, one of those oblique critiques of Lenin's having been reduced to cant for pedagogical purposes. In *Five Evenings,* Tamara stands as the sole representative of the Marxist idea that society deserves more attention than the individual.

The play-off between Tamara and Ilyin as characters illustrates some of the social problems in the USSR of status-consciousness, paperback Marxism, and an almost puritanic piety probably endemic in crowded living conditions. Mikhalkov stresses the claustrophobic environment with close-ups, for the most part, permitting television to provide a great deal of background noise and

FIVE EVENINGS

information, as Tamara's neighbors invade to watch the tube: Paul Robeson, a virtual icon of the Soviet fifties, celebrating his sixtieth birthday; Van Cliburn winning the Tchaikovsky Competition. These nostalgic images occur in other modern Soviet films—*Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears (Moskwa Slesan Ne Werit* by Vladimir Menschov, 1980) which shows the positivist approach to the fifties; it would appear that the nostalgia epidemic has finally hit Moscow. Mikhalkov's film could itself be of that era, if it didn't portray a bit too realistically the drab determination to survive and make do with the collapsed dreams of prewar socialism.

Mikhalkov likes to tell the story of overhearing two middle-aged women coming out of his film, saying to each other, "How did we miss that one 20 years ago? I don't even remember it playing." He also emphasizes in interviews that although the war is barely mentioned, it is a film about war, about people having survived a catastrophe without facing up to the psychological effects it has had on them.

Both Tamara and Ilyin try to appear successful to the other and happy with their lot, but both have succumbed to a loneliness and helplessness known in the Russian literature of despair. "Soviet" literature spurns despair, seeks positivism and glories in the triumphs of Soviet ideals over many a "Russian" ideal. From 20 years distance, it is easier and certainly more acceptable for Mikhalkov to look back on a trial of the Soviet spirit in which the Russians succumbed, though the Soviets survived. As bleakly as he depicts the period, he offers hope and a brighter future on the level of the love story. Aided by the younger generation, the nephew and his girlfriend, the former lovers are reunited and for the first time it becomes clear

how little the years have changed feelings that once were full of promise and spontaneity. The cold war is over. The gray and white film brightens to pale pastels and then to delicate watercolor tones, as the camera moves round the objects in Tamara's room, yielding close-ups of photos, memorabilia, trivia of a time less "realistic."

Although the ending, by breathing life into objects out of the past, supplies something of a materialist solution to an existential crisis, it is also a cinematic solution to a theatrical problem. As a purely cinematic resolution, a full-color pan of what Tamara has salvaged from an even more nostalgic past, it fails to point to a way to bridge their respective decades of reconstruction since the war. It is as if the soldier from *The Cranes Are Flying* has returned. Thus *Five Evenings* contains an ever retreating nostalgia which softens and warms the point of view of Mikhalkov's portrayal of a couple's five-evening-plan to recover a humane form of communication and honesty.

Although *Five Evenings* does not differ thematically from Mikhalkov's other work, it indicates a return to contemporary subjects and a stylistic gravity and self-discipline that permits no recourse to landscapes, slapstick, and paeans to Mother Russia. Shot in 26 days sandwiched between the shooting and editing of another quite different film, *Five Evenings* reflects the direction Mikhalkov's film-making will take in the future, he says.

His latest film belongs to that earlier period of summer 1978, although it did not receive a première until 1980 in Berlin, at which time it had not yet been screened in the Soviet Union. *Some Days from the Life of Ilya Oblomov (Nje Kolko Daej Is Shisni Ilji Oblomowa)* is adapted from a short section of Ivan Gontcharov's *Oblomov*, published in 1859 and dealing with that literary type, "the superfluous man." From one point of view, the superfluous man can be seen as taking a position of passive resistance to a society he disapproves of; from another viewpoint, his existence is parasitic, counterproductive, and deserving of wholesale condemnation. It is to Mikhalkov's credit that he has managed to make his superfluous hero sympathetic, attractive, and thus, in his listless and somnolent condition, interesting (although he could have learned a bit about the subtleties of filmed sleep from Nikos Panayatopoulos's Greek *Idlers of the Fertile Valley*).

In the opening scene, the camera wanders through the shadows and dusty light of an apartment, finally coming upon Oblomov resting on his couch, where he will remain for the first third of the film, exchanging a few words with his slightly less indolent servant between dreams of his childhood. The overture before the titles proffers an explanation of psychological sorts for his condition: a little boy is told that his mother is home but is not allowed to see her because she is sleeping. Her sleep is presented as something esoteric and hermetically sealed from him, virtually rejecting him; so, as with most sensitive children, admiration and revenge are combined in mimicry. Years later, our hero retreats into sleep at the very mention of activity, preferring his dreams of childhood summer afternoons where he wandered among snoring figures. In his apartment in Moscow, sleep is something of an alternate life style until the arrival of Andrey Stolz, a childhood friend, who brings with him light and enlightenment: progress, politics, energetic travelling, social commitments, and a sophistication beyond Oblomov's capacity to socialize.

The two figures are poised in a clear contrast of Stolz's style against Oblomov's sensibility. Stolz had a German father who endowed him with his *macher* character by sending him forth through the snow to make his way in the Russian world. The flashback of that parting shows the stern father giving advice, while the family retainers gather in their peasant dress to weep and wail at the departure of their young master. Thus the character of the German Fatherland stands as representative for what is considered good for society, but intrusive, ambitious and not native to the loving breast of Mother Russia. Oblomov tries to follow in Stolz's social wake—through aristocratic palaces and Czarist policies (scenes of which invoke *Doctor Zhivago*)—but he can't shake off his lethargy, because none of it interests him; he goes along out of loyalty to his friend.

A sauna bath scene offers the best images of their dissimilarity. Stolz thrashes himself with the laurel branches, while Oblomov simply soaks in the gentle steam, listening goodhumoredly to Stolz's programming their lives. Sitting in the

shadows before the window, Oblomov explains to Stolz that he has indeed thought about all this before—not how one lives, but why. The shot moves beyond the window to include a grand, sturdy tree, about which Oblomov waxes pedantic, but only momentarily, to illustrate the crisis of the superfluous man: why does one know all that he has learned? Wouldn't it be better to forget not just part, but everything? This speech leaves Stolz looming in the darkness, because it eloquently states the crisis of men whose education is rooted in the humanities as they face an era of progress and all-too-perfect technology.

Ultimately, it is not Oblomov's social conscience that is awakened by Stolz but his romanticism, for in part II, Olga Iljinskaja enters the picture. It is a standard *cherchez la femme* technique, which Stolz successfully applies, to make certain that Oblomov doesn't slip back into his inertia while Stolz travels in Europe. But even in matters of love, Oblomov's passivity is fatal, for he is capable of only one great gesture before sinking into the contemplation of nature and of his own feelings. In the idyllic gardens where he courts Olga, she expresses her dislike of a tree blocking her view. Subsequently, Oblomov takes to the tree, tearing, ripping, removing it from Olga's universe.

Under the influence of Oblomov's simple virtues, Olga also becomes a woman, ripe for Stolz's return, and with his energy and charm, Stolz sweeps her away. Olga's decisive, symbolic move to the driver's seat beside Stolz, leaving Oblomov in the back, virtually ends the film. A somewhat awkward voice-over narrative sums up their lives: Stolz and Olga married, and Oblomov married and died after moving back to Moscow. A final scene of Stolz and Olga on a sleepy summer afternoon, dreading the arrival of Oblomov's widow coming from Moscow to visit Oblomov's son, brings the story full-circle. A child is seen running through the grassy expanses of Russia shouting, "Mother, Mother!" We are left with intimations of an eternal succession of superfluous men waiting for Mother Russia to awaken.

One need not point out that Mikhalkov's portrayal of Oblomov runs against the predominant Marxist interpretation. In defense of it, Mikhalkov suggested that the Oblomov-problem is really only a "problem" for those who believe in boundless progress and activity at any price: "A man who sleeps harms no one, and we can never know what his dreams—in the widest sense of that—will lead to." Mikhalkov has securely established his talent for making films aimed at a wider public than those of Tarkovsky, for example, and he can afford a minor thematic innovation for two. Or perhaps it is not so minor, when one considers the conditions and conditioning to which the artist is subjected. One has the impression that Mikhalkov himself is a composite of the Oblomov/Stolz personae: his is the energetic success story of Stolz; his dreams are those of Oblomov, if one can judge them from a pronouncement in Berlin (West) where he stated that the aim of art is to inspire faith, hope and love in mankind. To be sure, Tolstoy would agree; to be safe, would Chekhov?

Reviews

THE ELEPHANT MAN

Director: David Lynch. Script: Christopher DeVore, Eric Bergren, and Lynch. Photography: Freddie Francis. Production design: Stuart Craig.

Not since Shakespeare called for "A muse of fire" in *Henry V* and Olivier provided the light of an arc-rod projector has there been such an interesting opportunity to examine the relations between film and theater as David Lynch's *The Elephant Man*. Since the film was not based on Bernard Pomerance's play of the same name, but draws on many of the same historical materials and case studies, it cannot properly be examined as an adaptation; instead, the specific decisions made by Pomerance and Lynch on how best to tell their respective stories of John Merrick reveal something about the basic terms and strategies of theater and film, and those distinctions in turn provide a clue to what *The Elephant Man*, as a film, is trying to accomplish.

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Merrick was a hideously deformed young Eng-

ishman who was discovered in a sideshow by the anatomist Dr. Frederick Treves, who arranged for him to live in London Hospital until his death a few years later. In the hospital Merrick was visited by many of the leading lights of Victorian society, who were moved by his rare intelligence and sensitive manner of expression. In both the film and the play, Treves agonizes over whether he has advanced his own professional reputation by putting Merrick on display in what might amount to simply another class of freak show; in both, Merrick's handbuilt model of a nearby cathedral is a prominent symbol of his aspiration, drive, and luminous skill. The play, however, provides its audience much greater insight into and respect for Merrick's extraordinary mind and deals at length with the philosophical parameters of Victorian ethics. The film's critique of the latter is conveyed almost entirely through Freddie Francis's dark, sharp, black-and-white cinematography —a claustrophobic and depressing view of the Industrial Revolution as a circle in Hell; the script (by Christopher DeVore, Eric Bergren, and Lynch) deals in affecting but comparatively oversimplified terms with the nature of man and the power of love.

Both the film and the play force their audiences to consider the relations between inner and outer being, though the film—at least on the script level—does not push much beyond the insight that Merrick is "not an animal" but "a human being . . . a man." Lynch's only previous film, the cult hit *Eraserhead*, deals like *The Elephant Man* with the problem of the painfully unacceptable child, and in both films Lynch has appropriately had recourse to many of the themes and devices of classic horror film. The Frankenstein monster, for instance, is a paradigm of the rejected child, and the project in many horror films —like that in Aristotelian tragedy—is to interrelate dread of the horror object with a sympathetic recognition of his, her, or its essential humanity. The humanism of *The Elephant Man* is conveyed not through its script so much as through its deliberate echoes of such compassionate horror films as *The Island of Lost Souls* ("Are we not men!"), *The Bride of Frankenstein*, *Freaks*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame;* the spirit of Lon Chaney, Sr. is particularly felt, not just in the eloquently vulnerable performance of John Hurt as Merrick, but in the tone of the entire project. To say all this, and to credit the brilliance of the Dolby stereo mix, the convincing sets, the editing, the costumes, the thoroughly professional acting by all concerned, and the arty but nevertheless magnificent cinematography—all this would be to give *The Elephant Man* its due, in its own terms, as a sensitive and moving version of Merrick's story that does not wish to be compared with a certain brilliant play. But it is in that comparison that the point of this review and the genius of the film are to be found.

The most significant decision Pomerance made was not to give the central performer "elephant man" make-up. Instead Merrick is played by a "normal" actor who adjusts his posture and gait into an analogue of Merrick's while the audience is shown authentic photographs of Merrick in the nude. The audience, then, is continuously in the process of reminding itself that Merrick is grotesquely deformed, while watching and hearing the evidence that Merrick is a beautiful being. The actor's task is to allude to physical handicaps while projecting directly Merrick's probing intelligence and wit. This play converts the theater into a very private, almost textual space, where the conceptual emphasis natural to language—always the mainstay of Western theater—fits naturally with the emblem of the actor who displays the inner Merrick. For the audience this is a profoundly doubled experience, and it is on this experience that the play's best verbal investigations are constructed.

As an experience in what might be called the theater of compassion, Lynch's *Elephant Man* is precisely opposite to Pomerance's. Here Merrick is presented in (accurate) make-up. Generically, this puts things on the footing of horror film; commercially, this means the film is liable to appeal to several kinds of audience, including those who like to go to freak shows. But the most interesting level on which this decision operates is this: *cinematically*, this decision was obvious, and was probably made with no consideration of the play whatever.

It often used to be said that film could not attain the complexity of literature, the intimacy of theater, the structure of metaphor, or the abstraction of music simply because it was confined to showing the surfaces of physical objects, including

people. Bazin did much to advance the notion of the transcendental landscape, Eisenstein demonstrated the range of several kinds of visual metaphor, Godard found the relations between persons and objects to be entirely problematical anyway (in *2 or 3 Things*)—and few readers of this journal are likely to be biased against the possibilities of film expression. Nevertheless, the fact remains that it is both appropriate and natural for a *film* on Merrick to show Merrick's body. The film audience, then, is in the position of continuously reminding itself that Merrick has a spiritual inner beauty, while watching and hearing the evidence of his deformity. This is in its own way just as humanistic an experience as that offered by the play, pointing to much the same conclusion. But the implication of these opposed poles of audience approach is that theater, like literature, encourages the spectator to generate a visual image of its full world while presenting an inherently conceptual text—whereas film, by presenting a visual world, encourages the spectator to generate a view of the interior and to organize an understanding of the concepts, emotions, and metaphors implied by what is shown.

What is exciting here is not this fairly rudimentary insight but the obvious ease with which the two versions of *The Elephant Man* demonstrate its accuracy and suggest the terms of its expansion. Charles Lamb once observed that *Hamlet* could not be successfully performed but had to be read in private, because the theater was too public a space for such meditations to be expressed or credibly enacted. Pomerance's *Elephant Man* transcends that limitation of theater by radically interiorizing its space. Lynch's film would seem at first to be simply a proof that Lamb was right, but about the limitations of the too-physical space of cinema. Lynch's ultimate project, however, is to demonstrate the interiority of film space (both via analogies to kinds of theater and through an examination of its own cinematic processes). And although Hurt carries the immediate burden of leading the audience past his make-up and into a sense of his essential grace, Lynch and his cowriters are very much in evidence as the creators of a structure in which the film addresses its own potential and guides the audience to examine its own quality of vision. *The Elephant Man* is most profound in its reflexivity, and most affecting in its

THE ELEPHANT MAN

use of what in another context I have called "mind-screens." For all that these observations about the inherent qualities of the media announce is not the absolute expressive limits of film or theater but the natural tendencies that demand to be confronted and gone beyond if a great form is to emerge. Rudolf Arnheim said in *Film as Art* that film's limitations make its art possible, but it is further true that to grapple with the dialectic of such limits is to advance the form as well as its canon of possibilities, and the task in this particular film is to assert if not define the quality of what cannot be publicly seen.

This brings us around once again to the problem of the freak show, which is also the problem of the nature of theater. One does not see the "elephant man" clearly until a half-hour of film has passed, and this delay teases the audience into an awareness of its desire to see how this freak actually looks. At the point of maximum expectation, when Treves (Anthony Hopkins) is given a private showing in the carnival, one sees not Merrick but Treves's shocked, compassionate reaction to what he sees. When Merrick is finally shown frontally and in the light (via a shock cut, in his hospital bed) and a nurse screams, one recognizes a stock technique from the horror film—one that lets the audience feel comfortable with its own voyeuristic impulses, at least for that instant. The more Treves worries about the moral implications of his putting Merrick more or less on display, and the more the obvious villains in the plot are presented as those who want to make money by luring audiences in for a view of Merrick, the more the audience must ask itself what the moral implications are of making a commercial

film that offers as its primary spectacle the grotesque "elephant man." Indeed Lynch goes well out of his way to put Merrick in a French freak show, to have him repeatedly and violently abused, to display his humiliation. There is also a good deal of talk about the nature of theater, which often offers some kind of "spectacle" (film, of course, even more so)—but the implication of this film is that spectacle and the desire to peek at the abnormal are both limited structures of the possibilities of vision.

As the actress Mrs. Kendal, Anne Bancroft introduces to Merrick the notion that "The theater is the most beautiful place on earth; the theater is—romance." Many of the voyeurs who torture Merrick are men who hope that the women with them will be sexually stimulated by the horrific vision (which is a well-recognized function of horror-film dates, especially in drive-ins); this is the level of "romance" encouraged by some aspects of grotesque spectacle, including pornography, and it hardly needs to be observed that love, like any really significant aspect of one's life, is much determined by the parameters of personal vision. Vision must be educated beyond the physical if one is to see the world in its fullness and if love is to become a personal, spiritual, political reality. This notion of love is larger than that of the "romance" of theater, but it is not false to the implications of Lynch's film.

Mrs. Kendal is the character whose role seems most truncated in relation to its parallel in the play: here she brushes into Merrick's room like Billie Burke in *The Wizard of Oz*, and within two minutes she and Merrick are trading a sonnet from *Romeo and Juliet*. It all seems too fast, too easy, until one recognizes that Mrs. Kendal *is* the Good Witch of the Theater, that she does have a magic wand: her vision of the theater of beauty, which is drastically different from the freak show and from the industrialized, oppressive landscape Lynch portrays in most of this film (which is itself a dialectic of "theatrical" possibilities and so cannot be called a theater of ugliness; one would need, like Derrida, to write ~~freak/show~~ under erasure). In the play it was most important that Mrs. Kendal was understanding and that she was a woman; in the film the emphasis is on her magic. When she calls Merrick "Romeo" she is addressing not his sexual potential but the transfiguring power of role. In her beauty and her magical acceptance, Mrs. Kendal is most like the figure of Merrick's mother (he sets their portraits together on his night table), to whom we will turn in a moment.

The Elephant Man is a sequence of shows—practically nothing else—and its climax comes when Merrick is, for the first time, a member of a theatrical audience. In a sequence that looks as if it had been edited on video, Mrs. Kendal's fairyland performance is shown (often in multiple exposure, sometimes over Merrick's face, and often hard to follow) as Merrick experiences it. For the first time Lynch offers an example of the theater as a site of fantasy (vs. industrial realism), of beauty (vs. grotesquerie), and of private experience. And it is clear that by now what he says about theater applies to film. This is the only point where *The Elephant Man* offers both objective and subjective events simultaneously, as the performance as seen by Merrick and an objective view of Merrick's watching are integrated. The wholeness of this vision, then, is not in some notion of art's escapist or fantasy value, nor in the grim realism of much of this film, but in that power of integration—especially the integration of interior and exterior realities, which was of course the audience's project in both versions of *The Elephant Man* all along.

At this point irony rears its head—or perhaps the moment is meant to be taken as some kind of apotheosis—and Mrs. Kendal turns the audience's attention to Merrick's presence, dedicating the performance to him. The audience applauds; Merrick is asked to say something or at least to stand—that is, he is once again "on stage." When he rises, the audience gives him a standing ovation. This might be read in two ways, and you will have to decide between them (keeping in mind that this will amount to a decision about the tone of Merrick's subsequent suicide, in which he dies for the experience of sleeping like a normal person): that Merrick can never entirely join the community of an audience that must always be somehow the spectacle; or else that *this* audience, applauding rather than gaping and hooting, is a good audience and sees in him much that is of value. The latter—and even the irony that arises when both these interpretations are credited—offers this film's audience a vision of its own best possibilities under the circumstances, and thus

both educates their reponses and (by saying that not all audiences are perverse) lets them off the hook.

Lynch has been preparing for this vision of inner theater all along, of course, and the final key to the film can be found in its four mindscreen sequences, which are certainly as powerful as anything in the rest of the film and balance its ruthless exteriority in a disturbing and beautiful way. In the first sequence, which opens the film (after some reflexively flickering credits), a vision is presented of Merrick's metaphorical conception: images of elephants and a thrashing woman, preceded by a view of the mother's face and followed by a billowing mist. The second is Merrick's dream, just after he has seen his own reflection in a window and realized that a hospital worker will soon be exhibiting him: there are images of hellish industry, and then some men force a dark plate toward the screen, which becomes a mirror in which Merrick—perhaps remembering an event in his deep past—sees his own face as a child. (In the following scene Merrick screams at his adult reflection in a mirror held by the hospital worker, but it is clear that he does this because that gross audience expects it.) The third sequence is Merrick's vision of Mrs. Kendal's play. The fourth, which closes the film, is a view of his death, in which he moves toward and into a starry vision of his mother's face. As she softly declares that "The heart beats . . . Nothing dies," the camera pulls into a white space between her eyes, and the image is for the first time entirely light. Then the credits come flickering back, reasserting the problem of vision.

The opening and closing sequences are not necessarily Merrick's views, though the inner two are; the images of birth and death may well proceed autonomously from the film's own reflexive process; and if they do, that only makes more strong Lynch's affirmation of the power of subjective—finally auto-subjective—film (a power perhaps best realized, as here, in dialectic with radical objectivity). The point is that these sequences balance the freak show, offer a richer possibility for cinema, assert that film can be a "theater" of inner being no matter how much it may appear bound to the surfaces of physical reality. The image of the mother, which for Merrick is a central vision of love and all that love means—including the possibility of rejection, a reminder of that beauty from which his ugliness has separated him, the first person he imagines he "disappointed"—becomes in the final moment an image of love, of acceptance, of transcendence: for Merrick, for the deeply moved audience, and for cinema.

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A POSTSCRIPT:—

Since the film purports to present Merrick's story factually, and since both film and play are often inaccurate, readers may wish to consult Michael Howell and Peter Ford's *The True History of the Elephant Man* (New York: Penguin, 1980).

Film Books: The Year's Work

In each Summer issue, *Film Quarterly* publishes a round-up of film books issued in the preceding year. The output has remained impressive, despite increasing difficulties in the economics of publishing; our coverage this year is only a few pages shorter than last year's, and the number of titles is almost the same. In the reviews and annotation below we have included all film books that have come to our attention (a few have doubtless evaded us) plus a number of works on television.

JEAN RENOIR: The French Films, 1924-35

By Alexander Sesonske. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Harvard Film Studies], 1980. $25.00 cloth, $9.95 paper.

Even before Jean Renoir died in 1979 the "Renoir industry" had come to mean not the production or the re-issue of his films, but the production of books about them. Those in English include Leo Braudy's *Jean Renoir: the world of his films* (1972); the disappointingly scrappy collection of Bazin's

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JEAN RENOIR: The French Films, 1924-35

By Alexander Sesonske. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Harvard Film Studies], 1980. $25.00 cloth, $9.95 paper.

Even before Jean Renoir died in 1979 the "Renoir industry" had come to mean not the production or the re-issue of his films, but the production of books about them. Those in English include Leo Braudy's *Jean Renoir: the world of his films* (1972); the disappointingly scrappy collection of Bazin's

articles (1974)*; Renoir's own *My Life and My Films* (1974); and Raymond Durgnat's *Jean Renoir* (1974). Sesonske's long-awaited book—advance signals having appeared in his journal articles—is certain to occupy a place of honor in the pantheon.

Jean Renoir: The French Films is far and away the most thorough and detailed treatment I have encountered of those films it deals with; and because of the films it deals with, it is frequently a delight. To read it is to find oneself plunged into realms of gold. Sesonske's is much longer than Braudy's book, and about as long as Durgnat's (which takes on all Renoir's films, and more besides). *The French Films* is attractively produced, with well-chosen and interestingly juxtaposed frame enlargements; it is for the most part unostentatiously written (with some lapses) and has no more typographical errors than Durgnat. Durgnat's bibliography is more extensive, and for a filmography we must still turn to Braudy (who, bless him, even lists distributors). Sesonske, who sensibly gives each film a chapter to itself, avoids the problem in Braudy's book of thematic organization (nature, theater, society, heroism. . . .).

Yet since there is in his book no real organization by theme at all, Sesonske leans too far in the other direction. All too frequently, *The French Films* reads like a series of separate monographs with cross-references superimposed only when they are unavoidable. Sesonske, held back by his academic caution, and lacking Durgnat's *brio,* has trouble moving from the particular to the general. While he does put to rest Bazin's ridiculous notion that Renoir managed to dispense with dramatic structure, Sesonske in general engages other critical approaches very rarely because his focus is so different. He concentrates on depth and specificity, not breadth and generalization. While analysis of thematics is in his treatment subordinated to recurrence, across the films, of types of character—an appropriate strategy in the case of Renoir—neither is adequately drawn out.

Sesonske's reticence has some untoward results. Suppose, for instance, that in view of the number of characters in these films who meet untimely deaths, we'd like to know about Renoir's view of violence. *French Films* (which doesn't even treat the deaths of Lulu in *La Chienne* and Sévérine in *La Bête humaine* in light of each other) is not the place to look. Again, Sesonske insists (in passing) that "there is a Renoir *style* in the 1930s." But in what does this style consist? In deep-focus shots, emphasis on motion within shots, sparing use of close-ups, avoidance of point-of-view shots and shot-countershots in dialogue, and in an unobtrusively moving camera of whose presence we are nevertheless made aware. The trouble with this answer is not just its formalism and lack of originality; it is that it gets the worst of both worlds. It's unhelpful enough to tell us nothing about any Renoir film, and not formalistic enough to please the real formalists. (Maybe the news that during the hunt in *La Règle du jeu* "in 22 shots—53 seconds—12 animals die . . . The length, in seconds, of the successive shots is 6, 6, 15, 2, 2. . . ." etc. will please them more, but only at the cost of annoying the rest of us.) Again, early in the book Sesonske introduces the promising idea of the "epitomizing shot" (Boudu on the Quai Conti) and the "piercing shot" (Dédé in the death-cell in *La Chienne*) as constitutive elements in Renoir's films. He then drops it, leaving us to guess what later examples might be.

Yet within his preferred area of specifics, Sesonske can be illuminating as well as painstaking. He gives the best account I have read of the Mozartian complexities of *La Règle du jeu* and can explain with a watchmaker's precision why—for example—the apparently inconsequential portrayal in *La Chienne* of the little girl playing the piano across the courtyard as Legrand steals Adèle's money works as well as it does. At the level of *explication* Sesonske excels, even if, inevitably, there is some unevenness. Besides these two films, my own preference runs to his treatments of *Boudu, Une Partie de campagne* and *La Grande Illusion;* no one, I imagine, could fail to read these with profit.

In among the mass of detail and interpretation, it is reassuring to be able to note a few things Sesonske misses. These include Renoir's fairly explicit references to American films: M. Dufour and the hapless Anatole as Laurel and Hardy in

*André Bazin, *Jean Renoir,* translated by E. H. Halsey and W. H. Simon, with an introduction by François Truffaut, Delta Books, 1974. See Paul Thomas, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Truffaut and Bazin on Renoir," *Sight and Sound,* Winter-Spring 1974-75.

Une Partie de campagne, or, in the final shot of *Les Bas-Fonds*, Jean Gabin and the hapless Junie Astor as Charlie Chaplin and Paulette Goddard. Sesonske is evidently puzzled not only by the end of *Les Bas-Fonds* but by the beginning of *La Marseillaise*. But here there is no great mystery. Cabri, the peasant, comes to be on trial for stealing one edible bird, a pigeon, because Louis XVI has just insouciantly devoured another, a chicken; Louis later opines that "The stomach is ignorant of the subtleties of politics," but Cabri knows otherwise.

There is a more consequential remonstrance. What interests Sesonske is a Renoir film taken singly and in the abstract as a finished product which, when authoritatively assembled and subjected to scrutiny, will yield meaning. He gets results: the patterns uncovered in Renoir's films are often illuminating, sometimes dazzling. Even so, something important is missed. "When I make a film," Renoir said, "I am asking others to influence me." What comes out is what goes in, and any Renoir film is the outcome of collaboration among friends and family. *La Règle du jeu* doesn't just "represent" collective self-consciousness, and *Le Crime de M. Lange* doesn't just "represent" community. Each of these films *is* what it represents; it crosses boundaries between portrayer and portrayed, observer and participant, audience and *équipe*, that to most directors are conditions of existence.

Sesonske, in downplaying the political background to *Lange*, seems determined not to allow this. "One need never have heard of the Popular Front to find . . . *Lange* an absorbing and exhilarating film," he sniffs; it "transcends the politics of the moment." But this is back to front. Uncoerced cooperation and community among workers, which *Lange* expresses and exemplifies, and which underlay the Popular Front, was to Renoir (and others) itself transcendent. It is the mercurial Durgnat and not the conscientious Sesonske who recognizes that the political background to *Lange* is not really background at all, but as much part of the film's fabric as its shooting schedule. And similarly, Sesonske's surprising reading of *La Marseillaise* as "a relentless progression in which the characters are merely swept along" is at variance not only with the evidence he adduces but with what Renoir was up to in the film.

To recognize what Renoir was up to is by no means a simple matter. The least disembodied of men, Renoir was no transcendent *auteur*, even by default; the searching reflexivity involved in his casting himself as Octave in *Le Règle du jeu* goes much deeper than Sesonske allows. It is by no means simply "a comment by Renoir on a director's relation to his work" (we are not dealing with Truffaut's *Day for Night*), but a statement of an unyielding, personal self-consciousness. Octave, and Renoir-through-Octave, is *le meneur de jeu*, who doesn't fit and is set apart; the "dangereux poète," the observer-from-within, the failed manipulator, the center of the action who cannot escape the disguise he has assumed without the help of the other participants in the *comédie*—help no one wants to give. That "tout le monde a ses raisons" is precisely what's terrible.

One of the aspects of Renoir this indicates is his status as *enfant terrible*, which Durgnat, another *enfant terrible*, brings out into the open. But the Renoir who claimed that "ingenuousness is absolutely necessary to creation" does not find adequate expression in Sesonske's book. Much else does; and *The French Films* deserves to be widely read, not by beginners (who should be shepherded to Renoir's own book) but by those who—like me—think you can't see Renoir's best films too many times. Sesonske hasn't said the last word on Renoir—who could?—but has produced an indispensable book. As a labor of love, it is appropriate to a director whose great films are themselves labors of love; yet it is Renoir, who knew the strange forms love can take—think of Marcel Dalio's mechanical birds—who always gets the last word. —PAUL THOMAS

MARTIN SCORSESE: THE FIRST DECADE

By Mary Pat Kelly. Pleasantville, NY: Redgrave, 1980. $9.90 paper.

Mary Pat Kelly's *Martin Scorsese: The First Decade* is an affectionate grab bag—call it a resource—of Scorsese memorabilia including: an introduction by Michael Powell; interviews with Scorsese, with actors who have worked with him (Peter Boyle, Amy Robinson, Robert Shields—but not Robert De Niro), and with Haig Manoogian, the New York University professor who produced Scorsese's first feature film, *Who's That Knocking At My*

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Door? and to whom Scorsese dedicated *Raging Bull;* background material on his family and neighborhood; an amusing memoir by his childhood friend Dominic Lo Faro; sections of Scorsese's storyboard for *Raging Bull;* excerpts from a treatment he wrote for an unproduced film, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem,* that predates *Mean Streets;* assorted reviews by Vincent Canby, Robert Ebert, Pauline Kael, Jack Kroll, *et al;* a filmography; and of course plenty of pictures and stills. Scorsese admirers will find this book worthwhile, but problems of judgment and proportion abound.

The decade has been stretched to cover films made between the early sixties and 1980. Fair enough; that's more than we thought we had paid for. On the other hand, the cover says, "Introduced by Francis Ford Coppola and Michael Powell," but forty or so words by Coppola qualify less as an introduction and more as a publisher's come-on. Still, Powell's introduction is one of the best things about this book. He writes, "Not since the beginnings of Kurosawa have we seen such nervous authority." Scorsese's "house or hut, caravan or automobile, purrs with electronics. Banks of video-tapes, screens, recorders, and projectors, gray and impersonal like Bertie Wooster's Jeeves, await the bidding of their young master. His bathroom is a cutting-room, his bedroom a projection-room, timeclocks activate video-tapes over twenty-four hours, music plays unceasingly, day turns into night, night into day." Powell, who calls Scorsese "the Goya of Tenth Street," is also the only writer in this book to hint at the true magic of the Scorsese-De Niro relationship: "To see this quicksilver genius work with Bob De Niro is a breathless business. They have worked together so closely and so long that they can almost be said to have invented each other." Reviewers of course mention their collaboration, but only Powell I think really recognizes just how beautiful and special it is.

The interview with Scorsese is fascinating, particularly with regards to *Mean Streets* and *Boxcar Bertha.* "Well," he says about the latter, "the crucifixion [of David Carradine, who plays a labor rebel] was in the script. I didn't put that in. But I figured I might as well get it out of my system once, so I did it." It's almost as if he takes for granted that the religious background is expected to be a major influence—he's utterly casual about it. And there's a hint in this casualness that he would like *the critics* to get the religious nonsense out of *their* systems once and for all, and move on to discussing his films, which are among the most original and innovative American films of the last decade. Indeed, while Kelly herself devotes a lot of space to speculating about the influence of Roman Catholicism on Scorsese, there's little informed and imaginative analysis of just how murderously original Scorsese has been—his pioneering use of sound tracks, his blend of savagery and rigor, the undistanced energy of his realism, the almost formal spontaneity he expects from his actors. After all these years it should be clear that Scorsese is a genius at recognizing talent in unknown actors and at bringing out the best in those who are known. And the actors interviewed in this book do in fact talk of the type of careful groundwork Scorsese lays for his own special kind of prepared improvisation. This is why I wish De Niro had spoken. For it is the actor De Niro whose methods and talents most closely match director Scorsese's, and insight into one is almost bound to bring insight into the other. Robert De Niro is our most expressive actor, and it is the directorial temperament of Scorsese that has proved the most accommodating—indeed the most complementary.

Kelly's round-up of reviews is less satisfying than the interviews. For the most part, she relies on old standbys like Canby and Kael. The reviews have almost all been culled from mainstream publications, and they're usually partisan (for *New York, New York,* which was not generally well received, Kelly unearths a glowing dithyramb from *Commonweal*). Kelly also slips in, amidst all these reviews from *Time, The New Yorker, The New York Times,* etc., a few of her own previously unpublished reviews. This sort of practice should have gone out with Oscar Williams's anthology, *A Pocket Book of Modern Verse,* where he would inevitably serve up ten pages of his own doggerel and one page of William Carlos Williams. It's not that Kelly's reviews are doggerel—different genre. They're just not very special.

The book's chronology is also a bit arbitrary. It gives production dates for *Who's That Knocking At My Door?* and *Boxcar Bertha,* but not for *Mean Streets.* It tells when Scorsese married each of his

three wives, but not when he divorced the first two, thus creating the awkward impression that the lapsed Roman Catholic is in actuality a practicing Mormon polygamist. In addition, there is little in the book (besides brief mention in reviews) concerning Scorsese's important and ongoing collaborations over the years with cinematographer Michael Chapman, editor Thelma Schoonmaker, and scriptwriters Mardik Martin and Paul Schrader. (In some areas, there's more solid data in the section on Scorsese in Michael Pye and Lynda Myles's *The Movie Brats.*) These are serious omissions in a book that purports to an overview of Scorsese's first ten years of work.

The most fascinating parts of the book are the assorted Scorsese storyboards, script notes, and work sheets, for here we see just how precisely Scorsese works out his shots, angles, the integration of sound and image, and so forth—right down to which ringside spectator is going to get sprayed with Jake La Motta's blood in *Raging Bull.* This is not a question of documenting the homework that any professional director has to do, but of providing insight—working insight—into the painstaking precision, the *merciless* precision, indeed, the almost sadistic clarity of the man who, if nothing else, has given us three of the best American films—*Mean Streets, Taxi Driver, Raging Bull*—of the last decade. —MICHAEL COVINO

KEATON
The Man Who Wouldn't Lie Down

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Dardis is the first biographer to have been granted access to the studio files on Keaton, and his readable biography is meticulously researched and detailed, with a rich variety of photographs and an indispensable filmography. It also corrects a number of errors made, understandably enough (for Keaton himself sometimes encouraged these errors), by Rudi Blesh in his otherwise fine *Keaton* (1966). For example, Dardis shows that Keaton's childhood was not so pleasant as he's made it out to be, and he traces those mythic childhood stories, like the one about baby Buster being carried aloft by a tornado and deposited safely in the middle of a road, to Buster's father Joe, who was constantly writing press releases for the family's vaudeville act.

Dardis also challenges the prevalent belief that Keaton's silent films were "uniformly profitable" (Blesh), certainly more profitable than the string of sound movies Keaton made for MGM in the early 1930s. Indeed, says Dardis, Keaton silent films always ran "a very poor third" to Chaplin and Lloyd in dollar earnings, and his masterpiece, *The General,* was in fact a major financial disaster (which explains why the low-budget, more conventional *College* came next). Dardis speculates, quite reasonably, that all this contributed to Keaton's growing alcohol problems since he recognized that the more profitable MGM sound films (which he had no artistic control over) were absolutely minor alongside films like *The General* and *The Navigator.* But, lacking Chaplin and Lloyd's economic independence from the studios, there was little he could do but trudge on.

Yet Dardis, though fair in his critical appraisals and painstaking in his research, doesn't risk the sort of ambitious speculations that make for major biographies, that show us the path a great artist has burned through his own personal jungles in getting to those mysterious places from which he delivers his best, most masterful work. I want to know why Keaton's sad, gaunt face should suddenly loom in a personal dream of mine in gigantic close-up—a personal dream directed by Carl Dreyer and photographed by Rudolphe Maté in a silent, ashen limbo. This is not idle speculation; it is a selfish demand for biographers of important artists to work overtime.

But Dardis goes soft at times and overreaches in wrong directions at other times. When Keaton's first wife, Natalie Talmadge, stopped sleeping with him, we are told, "Words seemed to be totally inadequate to express his feelings of anguish and pain . . . Buster Collier thinks that Keaton craved affection all his life and never really received it." Such clichés were never really serviceable and certainly have no place in the biography of a man for whom words were inadequate to express what he was feeling or thinking anyway. Unlike Chaplin, who was writing essays explaining his methods of film-making as early as 1915, Keaton was almost

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never able to explain himself. Thus when Dardis writes, "Today Buster's films are seen by some as paradigms of the human condition, as existential films that deal with Heidegger's *Dasein*, his notion of what it's like 'being there' in the world," he seems to be overstraining.

Dardis succeeds finally in giving us a broader —not deeper—picture of Keaton than any previous biographer; but something remains sadly, perhaps pathetically, elusive. Dardis speaks of "the darker, enigmatic side of Keaton, the side that keeps showing up in so many of his films and that Samuel Beckett found so intriguing that he had Keaton in mind when he wrote *Waiting for Godot*. This is the Keaton none of his friends ever reached, the private Keaton that remained cut off from the world, unable or unwilling to communicate with his friends." Dardis speaks of this darker side of Keaton, but he can't illuminate it, and in the end Dardis's Keaton remains as bafflingly cut off from the world as before.

This then is the Keaton paradox. Through the utter lack of sentimentality in his films, through his tight, almost mathematical sense of framing, through the playfully inventive spatial and temporal dislocations he was able to effect in his films *as film (Sherlock, Jr.* and *The Cameraman* are the outstanding examples), through the melancholy yet sardonic lineaments of that classical face (and if one can say of a film that it is so artfully constructed, so lovingly put together, that it retains the same startling impact it had upon its release more than half-a-century ago, cannot one say the same of a face?), through all these things Keaton was able to suggest an intelligence far greater than that of his cinematic peers—Chaplin, Lloyd, *et al.* Yet off screen Keaton's presence—unlike Chaplin's—hardly registers. There is a mystery to the man that no one has yet been able to fathom. The sense of Keaton I get from his biographies, even when the biographies try to say otherwise, is of a sad, depressed, rather pathetic figure—but that doesn't tally with the artistry and intelligence behind the films.

Yet perhaps when we try to get a handle on Keaton through (say) Chaplin, a point of comparison which offers itself all too readily, we are missing something. For perhaps—just perhaps—it is Buster Keaton being directed by a dream-Dreyer that makes more sense. And perhaps—just perhaps—it is Keaton navigating the Potemkin down the Mississippi that offers a more promising point of departure. At any rate, it wasn't Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* but Eisenstein's *Potemkin* that was knocked out of the Second Goskino movie house in Moscow in 1926 by Buster Keaton's *Our Hospitality*. —MICHAEL COVINO

HEMINGWAY AND FILM

By Gene D. Phillips. (New York: Ungar, 1980. $9.95 cloth, $4.95 paper.

HEMINGWAY AND THE MOVIES

By Frank M. Laurence. (Greenville: University of Mississippi Press, 1981. $20.00)

MAD Magazine ran a piece in the 1950s called "Book! Movie!" that accurately parodied the ways Hollywood "cleaned up" the plots, characters, and settings of novels when adapting them for the screen; in another piece they compared poster and ad hype with the less frantic movies the audience ultimately saw. To read these two new books on the films made from Hemingway's fiction is to be immersed in that commercial system and to understand why Hemingway was so hostile to Hollywood. There is not much in either book about the theoretical relations between literature and film (though Laurence does devote a chapter to the question, he doesn't take the matter very far, and Phillips confines his own discussion to clichés), nor about the important points of contact between Hemingway and Gertrude Stein that might have clarified what is genuinely cinematic about his fiction (notably the accumulation of suggestive detail in a continuous present that implies as well as manifests the activity of consciousness). There is, however, a great deal about plot changes, censorship, evasions of realistic treatment, inappropriate happy endings, producer hype, ad copy, and contracts. Hemingway emerges as a writer who resented the ways his stories were expurgated and sugar-coated, who distrusted with good reason the aesthetic judgment of producers like Selznick and Zanuck, and who resisted the intrusions on and distortions of his private life by Hollywood publicity departments. He would have preferred, for example, that a film like *The Old Man and the Sea* be shot on the model of neorealism. Typically

never able to explain himself. Thus when Dardis writes, "Today Buster's films are seen by some as paradigms of the human condition, as existential films that deal with Heidegger's *Dasein*, his notion of what it's like 'being there' in the world," he seems to be overstraining.

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This then is the Keaton paradox. Through the utter lack of sentimentality in his films, through his tight, almost mathematical sense of framing, through the playfully inventive spatial and temporal dislocations he was able to effect in his films *as film (Sherlock, Jr.* and *The Cameraman* are the outstanding examples), through the melancholy yet sardonic lineaments of that classical face (and if one can say of a film that it is so artfully constructed, so lovingly put together, that it retains the same startling impact it had upon its release more than half-a-century ago, cannot one say the same of a face?), through all these things Keaton was able to suggest an intelligence far greater than that of his cinematic peers—Chaplin, Lloyd, *et al.* Yet off screen Keaton's presence—unlike Chaplin's—hardly registers. There is a mystery to the man that no one has yet been able to fathom. The sense of Keaton I get from his biographies, even when the biographies try to say otherwise, is of a sad, depressed, rather pathetic figure—but that doesn't tally with the artistry and intelligence behind the films.

Yet perhaps when we try to get a handle on Keaton through (say) Chaplin, a point of comparison which offers itself all too readily, we are missing something. For perhaps—just perhaps—it is Buster Keaton being directed by a dream-Dreyer that makes more sense. And perhaps—just perhaps—it is Keaton navigating the Potemkin down the Mississippi that offers a more promising point of departure. At any rate, it wasn't Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* but Eisenstein's *Potemkin* that was knocked out of the Second Goskino movie house in Moscow in 1926 by Buster Keaton's *Our Hospitality*. —MICHAEL COVINO

HEMINGWAY AND FILM

By Gene D. Phillips. (New York: Ungar, 1980. $9.95 cloth, $4.95 paper.

HEMINGWAY AND THE MOVIES

By Frank M. Laurence. (Greenville: University of Mississippi Press, 1981. $20.00)

MAD Magazine ran a piece in the 1950s called "Book! Movie!" that accurately parodied the ways Hollywood "cleaned up" the plots, characters, and settings of novels when adapting them for the screen; in another piece they compared poster and ad hype with the less frantic movies the audience ultimately saw. To read these two new books on the films made from Hemingway's fiction is to be immersed in that commercial system and to understand why Hemingway was so hostile to Hollywood. There is not much in either book about the theoretical relations between literature and film (though Laurence does devote a chapter to the question, he doesn't take the matter very far, and Phillips confines his own discussion to clichés), nor about the important points of contact between Hemingway and Gertrude Stein that might have clarified what is genuinely cinematic about his fiction (notably the accumulation of suggestive detail in a continuous present that implies as well as manifests the activity of consciousness). There is, however, a great deal about plot changes, censorship, evasions of realistic treatment, inappropriate happy endings, producer hype, ad copy, and contracts. Hemingway emerges as a writer who resented the ways his stories were expurgated and sugar-coated, who distrusted with good reason the aesthetic judgment of producers like Selznick and Zanuck, and who resisted the intrusions on and distortions of his private life by Hollywood publicity departments. He would have preferred, for example, that a film like *The Old Man and the Sea* be shot on the model of neorealism. Typically

he would fall asleep during or walk out of screenings of these overstated adaptations, most of which—as Pauline Kael observed of *Hemingway's Adventures of a Young Man*—offered "the film equivalent of everything Hemingway was trying to eliminate from his writing." He appears to have taken most seriously the value of film in the clarification of social issues: thus he participated in the making of Ivens's *The Spanish Earth* (discussed by Phillips) and wanted the film of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* to champion explicitly, as his novel had not, the anti-Fascist cause (discussed by Laurence). He worked enthusiastically but fruitlessly during its first years of production to insure the realism of *The Old Man and the Sea* and was justifiably disappointed in the finished product. The only film from his work that he seemed to enjoy was Siodmak's 1946 version of *The Killers,* though at home screenings he would usually fall asleep after the first five minutes, when the material from his original story had been exhausted.

Gene Phillips's *Hemingway and Film* is the newest addition to the Ungar Film Libary, a series focused on the study of film adaptations of classic American literature and addressed to an undergraduate audience. Frank Laurence's *Hemingway and the Movies,* which is the more ambitious and scholarly of the two, as well as the better-written, began as a doctoral thesis and was in that form one of Phillips's major resources (see Laurence, p. 38, and Phillips, p. 148, for an instance of borrowing —a quip on *Jaws*—that borders on the unprofessional). Though Laurence does make a few errors (saying for instance that Eddy is killed in the movie of *To Have and Have Not,* p. 95; there is also a date typo on p. 116—1945 for 1944—and a caption error on p. 179), his research is on the whole impeccable, and his integration of biographical detail and critical interpretation is both entertaining and efficient. The only point I would question is his insistence that Hemingway sold the rights for *To Have and Have Not* (for $10,000) to Hughes rather than Hawks; Hawks always insisted that $10,000 was the sum he paid, and it is true that Hawks bought the rights from Hughes for $92,500 in 1943 and then sold them to Warner Brothers for that same amount plus a significant interest in the picture, but it seems likely that Hawks simply used the Hughes company—with which he had significant ties—as a blind for the original 1939 purchase. Laurence's list of Hemingway adaptations for TV is more complete than Phillips's (Laurence even includes radio versions), though neither of them mentions a version of *The Killers* that starred Dane Clark. Phillips includes a good deal of material that eluded Laurence, such as John Huston's uncredited work on the screenplay for Siodmak's *The Killers,* and he has also had the benefit of my own research on the genesis of *To Have and Have Not;* his relatively wider focus allows him to discuss *The Spanish Earth,* Hemingway's Catholicism, etc. Laurence's book, however—which is nearly twice as long as Phillips's—deals with its material in much greater and more interesting detail, and follows its critical nose to more complex insights. Laurence argues, for example, that Hollywood had a great deal to do with the creation of the Hemingway myth, with public conceptions of what he wrote and of what kind of man he was, and this amounts to a significant insight into the indirect role movies played in his career. His chapters on the subtler aspects of censorship (esp. p. 143) is a meaningful contribution to film history, though as suggested earlier his chapter on "Hemingway's Cinematic Style" is not as probing as it might have been. He gets in a wonderful jab at literary critics who don't know their film history (pp. 197-98) while making good use of his own training in English. And his prose is readable, often personal, and generally free from critical and stylistic clichés.

Phillips's book, however, despite its good-natured tone is not especially well-written; though his prose is not at all unclear, it lacks focused energy. His analyses and value judgments, while they could not be called superficial, do sometimes feel slight. Together with the volume's sloppy proofreading and a number of maddening redundancies, this suggests that much of the problem was editorial. The difficulty with Phillips's book and perhaps with the Ungar " 'X' and Film" series in general is its programmatic assumption that a film is worth analyzing simply because it is based on an important book. Phillips is in the nearly impossible position of discussing on their own merits a host of often terrible films, and of establishing a critical position that will make this all seem worth doing. This causes him to appeal over and over to Edward Murray—who in *The Cinematic Imagination* argued, for instance, that film was

incapable of sustained first-person narration, which allows Phillips to endorse the adaptations' evasion of the problem of point of view and with that the whole problem of consciousness and irony —and to George Bluestone, who in *Novels into Film* argued that books and movies work in different ways and that an adaptation has to be judged by how well it communicates in cinematic terms what the novel had presented in its own. This leaves Phillips arguing that many of the Hemingway films are viable as expressions of Hemingway's *philosophy*, and he milks to redundancy his insight that the adaptations often preserve one of Hemingway's favorite structures, in which a "code hero" inspires an "apprentice hero." In the service of this connection he forgives too much, constructing an apologia for a number of unfortunate plot and character changes and glossing over—as impossible in the first place, courtesy mostly of Murray but also of Bluestone—the failure of these films to attempt a cinematic equivalent to Hemingway's narrative strategies. It is curious that he performs little in the way of stylistic analyses of the films, particularly in regard to the question of over and understatement. It must be admitted, in fairness, that stylistic analysis does not play a strong role in Laurence's book either, perhaps because a film like *The Sun Also Rises* would simply crumble in the face of it.

Both authors find merit in *Islands in the Stream*, the one adaptation that can be said to improve on its original, at least in structure, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* emerges as, on the whole, the best film based closely on a Hemingway novel. Both find much to admire in the Siodmak *Killers* while acknowledging its drastic expansion of the original; Phillips has the better understanding of the Don Siegel remake. Both have good things to say about the second version of *To Have and Have Not*, Michael Curtiz's *The Breaking Point*. What the Hawks and Siodmak films demonstrate, it seems, is that the best of these movies are those that could only remotely be called adaptations; Phillips's argument that the films he is determined to construe as faithful to Hemingway's philosophy "will last as long as anything he has written" (p. 162) is thoroughly unconvincing. If one is interested in the subject, one ought to read both these books; I suspect, however, that *Hemingway and Film* will find readier acceptance in beginning "literature and film" courses, while *Hemingway and the Movies* will prove the more rewarding to the general reading public as well as to graduate students.

—BRUCE KAWIN

CINEMA/SOUND

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This is a bold enterprise: nothing less than to redeem sound film from the theoretical limbo to which it was consigned when the talkies came in. Rick Altman, the editor, has an engaging theoretical mind: he knows what constitutes an interesting problem, and he deploys imagination, intelligence, and verve in his analysis. He's sometimes tempted, however, both in his introduction and in his provocative essay in the volume, to a limiting kind of either/or formulation. Thus in the introduction he conceptualizes the relation between silent and sound film in an oppositional way calculated to permit making easy fun of the theorists (Arnheim above all, followed by Kracauer *et al.*) who noticed, rightly, that sound film was a fundamentally different animal from the silents—and concluded, wrongly, that it was an inferior species. But the logical dilemmas posed by film's bipartite history are with us still, despite what Altman confidently refers to as "advanced methodologies" (he is thinking of Bettetini!). Perhaps someday we will get to the point where, looking back in theoretical tranquility, we will confront what seems to be the obvious yet awkward and unwelcome truth: that silent film was one medium with its own conventions of meaning transmission, and that it was replaced by another, the sound film, a closely related yet different species operating with markedly different conventions—fundamentally those of dramatic dialogue and the seemingly contiguous "geography" of the master scene. Altman, however, treats sound film mainly as "the return of the silent cinema's repressed," i.e., talk. This would seem, I think, a bizarre formulation to the silent cinema's greatest practitioners; following Arnheim's dictum that art springs from the creative shaping of limitations, they seized on silent film's lack of spoken dialogue as a resource to be exploited for passionate, comic, or kinesthetic effect.

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The rigidity of Altman's formulations also tells against him in his essay when he turns to our perception of film. Here he poses a striking argument that the sound track is the real master or "ventriloquist," which the images serve. The case rests on, among other things, a discussion of why the camera usually points at whoever is speaking—allegedly to reassure viewers of the "reality" of the otherwise disembodied loudspeaker sounds and thus distract us from the "scandalous" fact that a screenwriter was their source. It is by no means clear that viewers share Altman's alarm on this score, and his view of the senses as a sort of sadomasochistic pair where one must dominate at the other's expense surely rests upon rather strained readings of film texts as well as a biologically false opposition—mammals, including humans, actually use sight and hearing in close coordination.By the end of Altman's essay, however, it may not really matter, because he largely collapses the distinction anyway, reversing his reversal of conventional notions. Though Altman pushes the argument further than seems reasonable, it will be extremely useful to have this ardent defense of the importance of sound entered in the theoretical arena.

A number of other papers in the collection also bear on general theoretical issues. Daniel Percheron contributes a sensible summary of different types of sound film, taking a surprisingly dim view of sound effects and music, "rarely conveyors of meaning." Metz, in a 1975 piece, deals with the metaphysical status of sound events. Mary Anne Deane postulates a "fantasmatic body" whose senses cannot be split and which thus must have the power of speech (one wonders about the bodies portrayed in painting, or heard in music); she then connects this with a Lacanian and feminist analysis in which the voice is sometimes phallic, sometimes maternal, and never really "off." Alan Williams demolishes the curious notion, which some people apparently do hold, that reproduced sound "is" the original, and emphasizes the ease of concealment of sound edits. David Bordwell deals with the limitations of analogizing musical with film structures, and analyzes Noël Burch's ideas in this area. Claudia Gorbman surveys the modes in which music can relate to the narrative or diegesis (she also contributes an exhaustive bibliography to the volume).

The rest of the papers focus on narrower questions, mainly historical. Douglas Gomery traces sound film's role in American strategies to dominate European markets. Dudley Andrews looks at the transition to sound in France, and at Renoir's work and Grémillon's *La Petite Lise*, for clues to the subsequent rise of poetic realism. Kristin Thompson describes the brief Soviet experiments with sound counterpoint, especially in Kozintzev and Trauberg's remarkable *Alone*. Other pieces deal with Jaubert's music as resuscitated in *Adele H*, the ideas of Eisler and Adorno, voice-over in Bresson, etc.

This seems to me one of the most important volumes published in film during the past year, and deserves study by anyone interested in film theory. —ERNEST CALLENBACH

CINEMA: A CRITICAL DICTIONARY

Roud, Richard, ed. Volumes 1 and 2. New York: Viking, 1980. $75.00.

This astonishing publication can be likened to a magazine that is 1,121 pages long: its contents are essentially articles, ranging from a column or two (Kinugasa, Frankenheimer) to lengthy treatments of directors whose work is dealt with in considerable critical detail. The result is more various and "encyclopedic" in feel than David Thomson's *Biographical Dictionary of Film* (it's also, of course, much longer) and more essayistic than purely reference works such as the Sadoul dictionaries or the *Oxford Companion to Film*.

The contributors include many distinguished critics and theorists: Andrew Sarris, Penelope Houston, Noël Burch, Tom Milne, Jonathan Rosenbaum, Robin Wood, John Gillett, John Russell Taylor, Richard Corliss, Arlene Croce, D. and A. J. Liehm, Gavin Millar, David Wilson, David Robinson, Jean-André Fieschi, Roud himself, and many others. The topics are mainly arranged by directors (sometimes linked with writers: Carné and Prévert), though there are also articles on national cinemas, on genres, and on a few performers. A few directors—Hitchcock, Dreyer—get multiple articles from different points of view. There are numerous illustrations.

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THE DOCUMENTARY CONSCIENCE
A Casebook in Film Making

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Without nitpicking, one is obliged to note that Williams' book is not without errors. The Kinetoscope is confused with the Mutoscope (p. 24). Porter is described as "the first American cameraman-director . . . who undertook to tell an audience stories through visual images on film" (p. 27) *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) is equated with the nickelodeon boom (1908) (p. 28). No reference is made to Bitzer's own cameraman-direction efforts (p. 30). Angle change in the midst of a 1908 scene is called virtually unheard of (p. 34). Freeze frames in films between *A Corner in Wheat* and the fifties are unmentioned (p. 44). Blanche Sweet is described as held captive in *The Lonedale Operator* (she's besieged) and saved by her father and her sweetheart (it's her sweetheart and his co-engineer) (p. 45).

The author explains he has made no effort to uncover new biographical information, but it is inescapably perturbing that a new study, appearing from as reputable a publisher as Oxford, should continue to perpetuate so many propositions that have been set aside in recent years. However thoughtfully employed by Griffith, few of his "innovations" originated with that great filmmaker, from cut-ins to cut-aways, from parallel editing to fades, from functional lighting to backlighting, from moving cameras to motivated points-of-view. Even dates of his early film appearances have shifted. Griffith appears in Biograph's *Professional Jealousy* (1907) a month before *Rescued from an Eagle's Nest* (Edison 1908) and tacks a sheet to a courtroom wall in *Falsely Accused!* for Biograph earlier the same month. Such dates may appear less-than-earthshaking to many readers, but they throw open to dispute the anecdotal memories of "first"

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no work of critical history such as this one can be altogether complete. But that's not the real question: what we really care about is how informative and stimulating the coverage is, and whether it gives a reasonably coherent picture of the art, 80 years into the twentieth century. Roud's huge project scores high on both counts. It is carefully researched, yet it raises difficult questions about directors and individual films; its contributors speak in many different voices, yet the over-all approach is comfortably within an area of fair agreement. Probably nobody will ever read the two volumes straight through—doing so would be like attending a five-year film festival managed by Roud and his associates, four films a day. But every library ought to possess the volumes, and perhaps some day we can hope for a paperback edition. —ERNEST CALLENBACH

THE DOCUMENTARY CONSCIENCE
A Casebook in Film Making

By Alan Rosenthal. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980. $19.95 cloth, $8.95 paper.

Rosenthal turns the down-to-earth interviewing talents he displayed in *New Documentary in Action* to an examination of the new wave of film-makers using film to address contemporary political issues. Problems of access, confidentiality, point of view pose difficult ethical questions; grinding difficulties of finding finance consume far too much creative energy. Rosenthal, an experienced documentary film-maker himself, talks with thirty Americans, Canadians, and Britons about productions varying from low-budget work by Will Roberts and Josh Hanig through lengthy ordeals like Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County* to the ambitious, complex British TV series, "World at War." Inspiration and information for anybody seeking to go and do likewise.
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FRENCH CINEMA OF THE OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE

By André Bazin. New York: Ungar, 1981. $12.95.

The genesis of André Bazin's realist ethic can be found in these early writings from the Occupation, which have been compiled by François Truffaut and translated by Stanley Hochman. The majority of these seminal reviews and essays appeared in French university publications, and they anticipate the lucidity and intelligence of Bazin's more popular pieces. As Bazin discusses favorite misappreciated films such as *Les Visiteurs du Soir,* or praises newcomer Robert Bresson, or prophetically proclaims culturally significant potentials for the cinema, he displays his familiar elegance. Although this volume should have arrived years ago, it is surely a welcome companion piece to the two Hugh Gray translations.
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SCREENING OUT THE PAST
The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry

By Lary May. New York: Oxford, 1980. $19.95.

Although he doesn't say so, May grew his book out of a 1977 doctoral dissertation done for UCLA. Its subtitle unnecessarily generalizes, for *Screening Out the Past* covers off-screen popular culture in no significant detail. Rather, it proposes that movies, sometimes alternately, usually simultaneously, have historically reflected and affected conflicting sociocultural values of twentieth-century America. This is hardly new ground, but May brings less typical frames of reference to chart the territory.

Set against Protestant, Victorian, Anglo-Saxon, bourgeois precedents, the author views film's early flickering images as plumbing alternate mass sensibilities: south and middle European, often Catholic backgrounds among turn-of-the-century immigrant urban customers. Soon, however, business interests cannily foresaw the dangers of impending censure (the National Board of Review, for example, responding to New York mayor McClellan's act of closing theaters on Christmas, 1908 as part of a reform sweep pointed at urban amusements). Leaguing narrative morality to expanding middle-class markets, the filmmaker-producers fabricated a successful dream machine, easily fine-tuned to formularized standards by the time of Pickford and Fairbanks. Such stars combined visions of American enterprise and seeming independence of industrial systems with fantasy adventures and fulfillments. Theater palaces insinuated escapism into moviegoing itself. Hollywood responded cleverly to post-World War I cultural ruptures. DeMille pointed up a fool-proof technique to combine sensualism with impregnable moral postures.

In broad outline such an argument is convincing if periodically repetitive of traditional overviews toward American film. May's early chapters (the heart of his dissertation) are those most closely reasoned, documented, thoughtful and convincing. He concentrates on women's roles affected by industrialization, on increased leisure, class-shared anxieties (like "white slavery"), and shifting patterns of public decorum. Griffith's early films are often seen to reflect dispositions adopted by social reformers whom Griffith ridiculed. Both establish the middle-class family as a paradigm of class and ethnic reconciliations. A Hollywood chapter mounts an interesting case for the appropriateness of immigrant Jews serving to envision, standardize and promulgate successful concatenations of WASP fantasy.

On closer examination, it's sometimes difficult to measure accuracies among the book's claims, for May's thesis itself embodies characteristics similar to what has been described as oppressive Freudian logic: a model that wins either way. Thus if at any given moment Hollywood mirrors contradictions among its audience, all evidence proves to be equally valid. Mary Pickford succeeds as a Victorian, pre-pubescent little girl while emancipatedly undertaking more scandalous parts and successfully figureheading a magazine column for her avid (the same? different?) body of fans. Doug Fairbanks epitomizes naive, Teddy Roosevelt espousals of the strenuous life while indulging personal and filmed luxury. Comedy shares anarchic Sennett and Victorian Chaplin. The serial queen is "healthy, robust and self-reliant" while also "locked into modes of Victorian gentility" (p. 108).

Other examples cited by May are arguable without, one hopes, quibbling. It's the fate of any generalizing writer to face muggings from his exceptions. If "Natty Bumppo cleared the land of savage Indians" (p. 5), this was not without growing concerns regarding equity and the whites' own savagery. If "each character reaps his just reward" in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (p. 13), how do we account for the death of Uncle Tom? If nameless "boy" and "girl" in Griffith films were incorruptible (p. 74), what of the "boy's" early service for the Musketeer of the Slums? It should also be noted that the author's descriptions of *The Crowd* (p. 217) and *Stark Love* (p. 218) hardly corroborate recent viewings of either title.

More basic arguments might be mounted toward May's exclusion of nineteenth-century precedents to movie "tradition." Although considering film (p. xii) "an ideal focal point for fathoming the birth of a new urban culture" (this is really the book's appropriate subtitle), May has not chosen to engage film likenesses with older popular form. Dime novels, for instance, not only challenged Victorian notions of "lady" (e.g., Calamity Jane), they pointed the way to subsequent moral self-censure as early as Erastus Beadle's holy injunctions to potential authors. May speaks of a popular literature "limited by price and subject matter to the tastes of the affluent" (p. 28), but he doesn't consider these nickel and dime entertainments for schoolboys, farmhands, and semi-literate workers.

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THE PRETEND INDIANS
Images of Native Americans in the Movies

Edited by Gretchen Bataille and Charles Silet. Iowa State University Press, 1980. Cloth, $19.95; paper, $9.95.

Ernest Alfred Dench, in his book *Making the Movies* (1915), wrote that "a few white players specialize in Indian parts . . . by clever makeup they are hard to tell from real Redskins . . .

"To act as an Indian is the easiest thing possible, for the Redskin is practically motionless." Dench would *like* the tribes to be "motionless" perhaps, the cigar store wooden varieties, but few Native Americans, urban or reservation, mixedblood or traditional, are stalled by his blunt insensitivities.

Gretchen Bataille and Charles Silet, editors of *The Pretend Indians,* have not been motionless in the cigar store either. The authors, professors at Iowa State Univeristy, studied the literature on tribal people in the movies and leaped from their front row seats to examine frontier fantasies and racist images in an outstanding collection of articles: Richard Slotkin on "Myth and Literature in a New World," Leslie Fiedler on "The Demon of the Continent," Vine Deloria on "The American Indian Image in North America," Philip French on "The Indians in the Western Movie," Dan Georgakas on "American Indians in Film," and 20 more authors.

The images of Native Americans in the movies come in various forms which tilt in time from the demonic to the natural ecologist. Most appearances of tribal people in the cinema are featherbound crude inventions, struck from repressed fear and colonial sentimentalities to resolve the structural opposition between the ideologies of savagism and civilization.

The Pretend Indians is a thoughtful balance of historical views, comments and analyses of stereotypes in literature and media, selected film photographs, reviews of popular films (such as *Cheyenne Autumn* by V. F. Perkins, and *Tell Them Willie Boy is Here* by Pauline Kael) and an annotated checklist of articles and books on the popular images of Native Americans in the American film. Until now the only other book on the subject has been *The Only Good Indian . . . The Hollywood Gospel* by Ralph and Natasha Friar.

Vine Deloria, the distinguished Native American author, introduces *The Pretend Indians* with an unusual blend of seriousness and humor. His tableau, however, focuses more on written material, including critical comments on the novel *Hanta Yo* by Ruth Beebe Hill, than it does on the ersatz visage of tribal people in the movies—notwithstanding his assertion that visual images "hold much more potential for communication than does the printed word. A vivid scene will do more to impress longstanding images than the most clever aphorism or slogan."

Most anthologies reveal some disharmonies in the assimilation of ideas. This book is an exception. The editors provide an instructive overview and interpretive summaries to each section of the book.

Dench, not tribal people, is rendered "motionless" with his cigar store terminal creeds.

—GERALD VIZENOR

FILM NOIR
An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style

Ed. by Alain Silver and Elizabeth Ward; coeds. Carl Macek and Robert Porfirio. (New York: Overlook Press, 1979. $25.00)

Credits, synopses, and interpretations of several hundred films noir, arranged alphabetically, with 75 stills. A good introduction outlines some characteristics of the noir cycle, and a very interesting appendix discusses noir elements in the gangster film, the Western, and the period film (though not the horror film). Further appendices provide a chronology of titles (1927-76); a note on research sources; a bibliography; and lists of films keyed to directors, screenwriters and novelists, directors of photography, composers, producers, actors and actresses, and releasing companies. The main body of the book consists of analyses of individual films, and these are generally interesting and perceptive, though some of the

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Vine Deloria, the distinguished Native American author, introduces *The Pretend Indians* with an unusual blend of seriousness and humor. His tableau, however, focuses more on written material, including critical comments on the novel *Hanta Yo* by Ruth Beebe Hill, than it does on the ersatz visage of tribal people in the movies—notwithstanding his assertion that visual images "hold much more potential for communication than does the printed word. A vivid scene will do more to impress longstanding images than the most clever aphorism or slogan."

Most anthologies reveal some disharmonies in the assimilation of ideas. This book is an exception. The editors provide an instructive overview and interpretive summaries to each section of the book.

Dench, not tribal people, is rendered "motionless" with his cigar store terminal creeds.

—GERALD VIZENOR

FILM NOIR
An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style

Ed. by Alain Silver and Elizabeth Ward; coeds. Carl Macek and Robert Porfirio. (New York: Overlook Press, 1979. $25.00)

Credits, synopses, and interpretations of several hundred films noir, arranged alphabetically, with 75 stills. A good introduction outlines some characteristics of the noir cycle, and a very interesting appendix discusses noir elements in the gangster film, the Western, and the period film (though not the horror film). Further appendices provide a chronology of titles (1927-76); a note on research sources; a bibliography; and lists of films keyed to directors, screenwriters and novelists, directors of photography, composers, producers, actors and actresses, and releasing companies. The main body of the book consists of analyses of individual films, and these are generally interesting and perceptive, though some of the

interpretations of psychological motivation, etc., may seem debatable (I would argue, for instance, that in *Gun Crazy* Bart shoots Annie Laurie not to keep her from being shot by police but to keep her from shooting his old friends, and that "sociopath," by strict definition, would apply only to Annie and not to Bart). At times the entries are self-indulgently long, and some of them suffer from 20-20 hindsight; there is an attempt, for instance, to downplay the comic tone of *The Big Sleep* in the interest of making it conform to "the noir vision." The proofreading is atrocious, and there is a clear need for a second edition that would correct the many errors in spelling, punctuation, dating, and fact. This is a glorified filmography rather than an encyclopedia, but it is still a good deal more than a coffee-table book; although it is hardly definitive, it is useful. —BRUCE KAWIN

SPAGHETTI WESTERNS
Cowboys and Europeans from Carl May to Sergio Leone

By Christopher Frayling. London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981. $30 cloth, $19 paper.

Frayling's *Spaghetti Westerns* is an uneasy coalition of at least four books: a genre study of Italian westerns, a social analysis of European-made westerns in general, a survey of the perception of the American West in European literature and film, and an extension of the continuing study of the western myth as explored by Will Wright, John Cawelti, Jim Kitses and others. Cohesion and unity of purpose are not the book's strengths.

Best to skip the 35 pages of prologue and preface, in which Frayling tries to establish his critical and sociohistorical viewpoint, which is never satisfactorily related to the work at hand. The book proper is long on useful background information, such as Frayling's description of the studio tradition of "sword and sandal" epics that gave rise to the spaghetti westerns in the early sixties, or his structural analysis of the basic plot variants of Italian westerns. The last chapter, on "political" spaghetti westerns, intelligently surveys the south-of-the-border subgenre, contrasting the xenophobic, watered-down Hollywood version of Mexico and its revolution with the more comprehending view of the Italians, revolutionary kindred spirits. The epilogue is a splendid analysis of *My Name Is Nobody* that ties the whole genre —though not the book—neatly together.

What harms the book most is an overabundant recourse to extracinematic sources. This is, to be sure, an entry in the "Cinema and Society" series; and it is useful to note the importance of Italian Catholicism, revolutionism and "amoral familism" (Edward C. Banfield's term) in the spaghetti western genre. But there's far too much on historical and literary tradition to suit an analysis of the phenomenon, which is surely one of the most deliberate attempts in film history at establishing a "pure" narrative cinema, emancipated from the constraints of all "real-world" social, historical, literary and psychological correlates.

Sergio Leone is favored with excellent biographical and career information; but, curiously, little or no such information is forthcoming on the several other (often more productive and typical) practitioners of the genre. One gets a vague sense that much of what non-Italian viewers have taken for originality in Leone's films is mere genre convention; but Frayling offers no insight into where convention ends and individual vision begins, what role Leone played in establishing the conventions to begin with, and where he transcends the genre (if he does). The disproportionate emphasis on Leone goes unexplained: is he stressing Leone's films as the work of an auteur, as the best examples of the genre, or merely as the most widely-known specimens?

Despite its interesting treatment of various aspects of Leone's first four westerns, this central section, titled "The Films," left me feeling cheated. My curiosity about such often-mentioned non-Leone films as *The Big Gundown, Pistols Don't Argue, The Hills Run Red, They Call Me Trinity, Seven Guns for the MacGregors, Requiescant* and *A Pistol for Ringo* remains unsatisfied. Frayling gives the reader no feel for the ambience of these films, for their relation to Leone's films and to one another, nor for the differences in style that separate Leone from Corbucci, Sollima, Lizzani, Tessari, Damiani, Cervi. The title of the book is deceptive, because Frayling doesn't use Leone's work to illuminate a survey of spaghetti westerns so much as he uses these other representatives of the genre as incidental background to a study of Leone.

His access to the screenplays of Leone's films enables him valuably to "restore" (at least in prose) sections that were cut from one or more release versions of the films, and recount ideas and imagistic links that are often missing. Unfortunately, he's relied too much on the screenplays and too little on the films, judging from the cluster of errors in his analysis of the Dollars Trilogy, and his willingness to settle for generalities in discussing visual style.

At the crux of Frayling's view of Leone and of the genre is a tension between two viewpoints: First, that "Leone's westerns constitute a form of cinema about cinema," that the films are about westerns, not about the West; and second, that Leone and other Italian directors did, after all, base their work on the real world, that they were "concerned with aspects of American history in which Hollywood had rarely shown interest." On this latter point, Frayling puts his impressive knowl-

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edge of firearms to good use in taking up the question of Leone's purported attention to historical detail, and demonstrates that appropriateness, not authenticity, is the hallmark of Leone's emphasis on props and decor.

This kind of information is interesting and useful to students and fans of Italian westerns; and the strength of *Spaghetti Westerns* remains in Frayling's reportage of the fruits of his research, never in his sporadic efforts at critical analysis. —ROBERT C. CUMBOW

GENRE

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HOLLYWOOD GENRES

By Thomas Schatz. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981. $19.95.

The concept of genre is inherently messy, due to the incorrigible tendencies of film-makers to overlap and interpenetrate whatever definitions of genres intrepid critics propose, so it is natural to hope for greater clarity through the application of new theoretical ideas. In his work of meta-theory, mainly aimed at film teachers and evidently trying to jack up their handling of genre to a more theoretically elevated level, Neale reviews recent theoretical thinking to discern how it might bear on problems of genre analysis; he also explores such concepts as fetishism and scopophilia as possible illuminations of genre effects. However, the implications for genre are slim, so Neale largely falls back on a focus on film as discourse, with frequent reminders that "the subject is a function, or better, a functioning of signification. Different modes of signification produce different functionings of subjectivity, moving the subject differently in their various semiotic processes, producing distinct modes of address." Readers who feel the need for general instruction along such lines will probably be happy with Neale's approach, but those who want to know how individual genre films actually work will not find Neale of much interest. About *Baby Face Nelson* he notes that "Mickey Rooney's machine gun is an essential component in the signification of his attributes as a character at a number of levels." In the Marx Brothers, "dialogue follows a logic of its own, thus leading to semantic and dramatic absurdities." Chaplin's gags, "to return to the situation level, are dependent upon a mixing of the registers of behavior and action."

What has gone wrong when people write like that? Neale appears from his text to be a serious and probably devoted teacher. He has obviously spent a great deal of time consulting recent texts, and has probably—this is less obvious—seen a great many films. He is socially conscious enough to include a special section on feminist ideas about various kinds of genre nastiness. Yet it is difficult to see how his writing will be of use to the fellow teachers who are his audience. Its observations about individual films are stupefyingly banal. It does not produce new understandings of genre films or genre processes, nor does it offer a new synthesis of recent ideas about "cinema as an institution"; its formulations (one hopes) are certainly not the sort of thing teachers would try to offer in classes. It is hard even to imagine it could make them feel guilty over their underdeveloped theoretical state.

But one undeniable effect it has is to make me, at least, feel nostalgic for the *politique des auteurs.* Whatever we think of its later elevation to the status of a theory (it made no empirically falsifiable predictions—a minimal scientific criterion for theory) at least its original practitioners were *engaged:* they wanted to make films in certain ways, and to combat the making of films in other ways. This lent urgency, and intelligence, and sometimes poetry to their writings—and later to the films they made. Like Lenin, they relished the question of "What is to be done?"

If Neale falls into scholasticism by attempting theory without the resources to bring it off, Schatz embodies the opposite peril. He has a genuine interest in actual films, but only a modest curiosity about theoretical issues they generate. Still, his book offers workable beginnings—of notions about genre evolution, for example —even if his approach rests on a kind of reification, as does much genre study, of course. (He writes things like, "With its growing awareness of the formal and thematic structures, the genre evolves into . . .") However, the bulk of the work is a textbooky, dutiful survey of genre films, making running observations on the themes and variations they played with. The ideas are mostly confined to the preliminaries and an epilogue.

Issues of genre are not merely academic, as both Neale and Schatz make them seem. Writers and directors and audiences confront them daily, in working upon or watching the lowliest TV situation comedy or the most ambitious widescreen epic. There is room for a good book in the area, but it needs a writer who finds these issues truly challenging. —E.C.

OF MICE AND MAGIC

By Leonard Maltin. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980. $24.95.

The omnipresent Maltin puts us in his debt once again, this time with a carefully researched and affectionately written history of the American animated cartoon (we could say "Hollywood cartoon" except that the Fleischer New York work had a distinctly gritty Eastern character). Maltin gives readable summaries and impressions of a vast number of cartoons, with acute running com-

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mentary on their achievements, problems, and interrelationships. He also portrays the animation studios—which seem to have normally had a far nuttier atmosphere than their fiction-film counterparts—through a nice mixture of personal anecdotes drawn from dozens of interviews, technical information on the evolution of animation technology, and reports from the exhibition end of the business. The coverage runs from the very beginnings with Winsor McCay up through the final pathetic disintegration into Saturday morning kiddie-fodder—followed, of course, by magical revivals as astonishing as any cartoon character ever enjoyed: Bakshi, *Watership Down,* and many other recent features. Maltin also provides filmographies by studios, rental sources, and a thorough index. There are copious illustrations (8 pages in color). While the text does not address any high aesthetic issues—except indirectly through the fertile mind of Chuck Jones—it provides a comprehensive overview of a rich and reflection-provoking genre. —E.C.

THE AMERICAN ANIMATED CARTOON
A Critical Anthology

Edited by Gerald Peary and Danny Peary. (New York: Dutton, 1980.

An ambitious and readable collection of interviews, rarities, and articles touching on virtually the entire history of the American cartoon, from *Little Nemo* to *The Lord of the Rings,* with minor but tantalizing discussions of experimental and independent animation, and with seven separate bibliographies. Only two of the 37 articles have been previously anthologized, and fifteen have been written especially for this book. These commissioned pieces are among the best: Ronnie Scheib on Tex Avery, Sybil Delgaudio on sex-role stereotyping in Warner Brothers cartoons, and George Griffin on reflexivity deserve special mention. In "Pronoun Trouble" Richard Thompson does an even better job on Daffy Duck than he did on the Road Runner in his "Meep-Meep!" (also included). Other significant new work includes William Horrigan on Krazy Kat, Peter Brunette on *Snow White,* John Canemaker on Winsor McCay, and Barbara Martineau on "Women and Cartoon Animation, or Why Women Don't Make Cartoons, or Do They?" Some of the best pieces are interviews, especially Joe Adamson's with Dick Heumer and Chuck Jones; others interviewed include Ralph Bakshi, J. R. Bray, Robert McKimson, Mel Blanc, John and Faith Hubley, Walter Lantz, and Bill Hanna. Of particular interest are contemporary responses to early UPA (by David Fisher), to *Bambi* (by Manny Farber), and to the metaphysical romanticism of Oswald the Rabbit and others (by e. e. cummings); William De Mille's parody of sociological film criticism ("Mickey *versus* Popeye") is marvelous, while E. M. Forster's sarcastic appreciation of "Mickey and Minnie" has little to recommend it. Much is made of the animators' strike at Disney and other studios, and Disney's friendly testimony before the HUAC is included in its damning entirety.

Occasionally an editorial decision is puzzling: there is such good work on Vlad Tytla, for instance, that one wonders why there was no mention of Oskar Fischinger, who also contributed so much to Disney (the basic idea for *Fantasia,* for instance) and was clearly a major figure in his own right. The cummings and Griffin pieces cry out to have been augmented by a section on animation theory (Elie Faure, etc.). The contribution of Emile Cohl is slighted in Conrad Smith's "Early History of Animation." Some discussion of pixillation might reasonably have been included. Though the focus on the American, basically narrative cartoon appears to have mandated only passing reference to Robert Breer, Len Lye, Norman McLaren, Hans Richter, etc.—and none at all to Viking Eggeling or Oskar Fischinger—there ought certainly to have been a critical piece on Max and Dave Fleischer, who are mentioned throughout the book but discussed at length only in relation to the animators' strike. Occasionally there are errors: the editors state that Clampett inlcuded in *Bugs Bunny Superstar* only those Bugs cartoons he himself had directed (the film includes *Hair-Raising Hare,* directed by Jones), and Michael Wilmington identifies Mae Marsh as the mother in *Birth of a Nation* (pp. 77-78), but on the whole the volume is accurate. John Canemaker's piece on Winsor McCay is marred only by its failure to discuss an extant print of *Gertie the Dinosaur* in which there is a live-action frame. The crossover between newspaper comics and cartoons is explored only tentatively (except in the wonderful piece on Krazy Kat), and there ought to have been at least a mention of Porter's live-action *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend.*

This book was not, however, intended to be a comprehensive history, and it has a satisfying and well-realized focus on the contributions of and relations among the Disney Studio, Warner Brothers, and UPA. The editors have a clear commitment to undermining "the reputation of the Walt Disney Studio as the *only* worthwhile producer of American cartoon animation," and their best efforts in this direction are the excellent pieces on Warner Brothers (especially those on Tex Avery and Chuck Jones; the only clunker is Patrick McGilligan's article on Bob Clampett). The limited animation of Hanna-Barbera and their Saturday morning cohorts emerges as the villain of the piece. For its excellent recreation of working conditions throughout the history of the industry, its well-chosen interviews, its overall good taste and critical acuity, and its loving appreciation of Warner Brothers, this book should do well both in the

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A Critical Anthology

Edited by Gerald Peary and Danny Peary. (New York: Dutton, 1980.

An ambitious and readable collection of interviews, rarities, and articles touching on virtually the entire history of the American cartoon, from *Little Nemo* to *The Lord of the Rings,* with minor but tantalizing discussions of experimental and independent animation, and with seven separate bibliographies. Only two of the 37 articles have been previously anthologized, and fifteen have been written especially for this book. These commissioned pieces are among the best: Ronnie Scheib on Tex Avery, Sybil Delgaudio on sex-role stereotyping in Warner Brothers cartoons, and George Griffin on reflexivity deserve special mention. In "Pronoun Trouble" Richard Thompson does an even better job on Daffy Duck than he did on the Road Runner in his "Meep-Meep!" (also included). Other significant new work includes William Horrigan on Krazy Kat, Peter Brunette on *Snow White,* John Canemaker on Winsor McCay, and Barbara Martineau on "Women and Cartoon Animation, or Why Women Don't Make Cartoons, or Do They?" Some of the best pieces are interviews, especially Joe Adamson's with Dick Heumer and Chuck Jones; others interviewed include Ralph Bakshi, J. R. Bray, Robert McKimson, Mel Blanc, John and Faith Hubley, Walter Lantz, and Bill Hanna. Of particular interest are contemporary responses to early UPA (by David Fisher), to *Bambi* (by Manny Farber), and to the metaphysical romanticism of Oswald the Rabbit and others (by e. e. cummings); William De Mille's parody of sociological film criticism ("Mickey *versus* Popeye") is marvelous, while E. M. Forster's sarcastic appreciation of "Mickey and Minnie" has little to recommend it. Much is made of the animators' strike at Disney and other studios, and Disney's friendly testimony before the HUAC is included in its damning entirety.

Occasionally an editorial decision is puzzling: there is such good work on Vlad Tytla, for instance, that one wonders why there was no mention of Oskar Fischinger, who also contributed so much to Disney (the basic idea for *Fantasia,* for instance) and was clearly a major figure in his own right. The cummings and Griffin pieces cry out to have been augmented by a section on animation theory (Elie Faure, etc.). The contribution of Emile Cohl is slighted in Conrad Smith's "Early History of Animation." Some discussion of pixillation might reasonably have been included. Though the focus on the American, basically narrative cartoon appears to have mandated only passing reference to Robert Breer, Len Lye, Norman McLaren, Hans Richter, etc.—and none at all to Viking Eggeling or Oskar Fischinger—there ought certainly to have been a critical piece on Max and Dave Fleischer, who are mentioned throughout the book but discussed at length only in relation to the animators' strike. Occasionally there are errors: the editors state that Clampett inlcuded in *Bugs Bunny Superstar* only those Bugs cartoons he himself had directed (the film includes *Hair-Raising Hare,* directed by Jones), and Michael Wilmington identifies Mae Marsh as the mother in *Birth of a Nation* (pp. 77-78), but on the whole the volume is accurate. John Canemaker's piece on Winsor McCay is marred only by its failure to discuss an extant print of *Gertie the Dinosaur* in which there is a live-action frame. The crossover between newspaper comics and cartoons is explored only tentatively (except in the wonderful piece on Krazy Kat), and there ought to have been at least a mention of Porter's live-action *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend.*

This book was not, however, intended to be a comprehensive history, and it has a satisfying and well-realized focus on the contributions of and relations among the Disney Studio, Warner Brothers, and UPA. The editors have a clear commitment to undermining "the reputation of the Walt Disney Studio as the *only* worthwhile producer of American cartoon animation," and their best efforts in this direction are the excellent pieces on Warner Brothers (especially those on Tex Avery and Chuck Jones; the only clunker is Patrick McGilligan's article on Bob Clampett). The limited animation of Hanna-Barbera and their Saturday morning cohorts emerges as the villain of the piece. For its excellent recreation of working conditions throughout the history of the industry, its well-chosen interviews, its overall good taste and critical acuity, and its loving appreciation of Warner Brothers, this book should do well both in the

textbook market and with the general reading public.

—BRUCE KAWIN

SHOWDOWN
Confronting Modern America in the Western Film

By John H. Lenihan. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.

Socio-historical approaches have dominated genre studies over the past decade; Lenihan uses a method previously applied to science-fiction and the crime film in this survey of the Western. Specifically, Lenihan discusses the genre as reflection of a changing temperament in American society over the past four decades. Accepting the endemically American qualities of the Western, Lenihan attempts to prove how McCarthyism, the arms race, Korea and Vietnam, alienation and race problems brought about inflections in genre archetypes (the image of the frontier; individualism; race relations between Indians and settlers; the role of the gunfighter as hero).

Although Lenihan is an historian, his approach involves a kind of one-concept thinking often lacking proof or justification. Once you understand the basic premise of the book it is hardly necessary to go into each exegesis to grasp what the author is doing; some of Lenihan's analyses—especially the comments on shifts in racial attitudes in *The Searchers* and the dispirited anti-Americanism of *High Noon*—are naive and dated. This may seem more a condemnation of the method itself than of this particular book, but it is unfortunate the author doesn't put his own technique to better use. The failings may be due more to the cursory, hurried text. It is embarrassing that Lenihan should discuss *The Wild Bunch* in terms of the influence of "modern technology" in the West while ignoring the relation of this complex film to the turbulence of the late sixties. A confusion sets in when Lenihan modifies his method with the auteurist approach associated with Jim Kitses's *Horizons West:* it is odd given his own socio-historical approach that Lenihan should dismiss outright the books by Will Wright and Philip French, on grounds that the former is a narrow, rigid exercise in structural criticism and the latter too unoriginal in the social themes it discusses. Such remarks make Lenihan's work appear to be produced in a spirit of oneupmanship.

More evidence of the book's hurried nature can be found in a number of errors. Certain mistakes are typographical, but I spent some time trying to understand the bewildering reference to "the Ballard gang" in *The Wild Bunch.* More problematic from an aesthetics standpoint is Lenihan's continuance of the tendency to place films that have achieved a degree of stature in film history against works sharing mere thematic similarities; a notable instance is the discussion of *The Wild Bunch* and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.* It seems a dearth of imagination or patience leads to such discussions, and to the treating of *The Left-Handed Gun* and *One-Eyed Jacks* in terms of the fifties "rebel" image.

The confusion and pitfalls of the book can be traced again to the method. Lenihan certainly knows the literature, including the principal texts on film and society (Jarvie, Sklar, etc.), but he is unable to use it to prove the causal connections between social change and transitions in the genre. This is especially true with his use of such thinkers as Erich Fromm, Theodore Roszak, and Daniel Bell to make a point: in most instances the names are merely placed in the footnotes in the hope that the evidence is demonstrated and the argument proven. Even if one accepts that highly idiosyncratic (and sometimes exiled) directors such as Fuller, Boetticher and Peckinpah were sensitive to the social issues of their eras, it is hard to proceed with the same thinking regarding Sergio Leone, particularly when this director has already stated the broader and more European concerns of his "dollar trilogy." This is not to belittle the method altogether; in the cases of *Tell Them Willy Boy is Here, Soldier Blue* and the revisionism of Robert Altman there is the conscious attempt at subversion of the genre which is the natural consequence of social change and the increased position of the minority voice in the film industry. Perhaps if Lenihan had concentrated on such areas instead of straying into permutations of auteurism and structuralism his method might have held up.

The greatest difficulty of the historical approach is its lack of concern for the historicity of the genre itself. The "negative" aspects of the heroes of *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, The Searchers, Warlock* and *Winchester 73* can be found in a germinal stage in characterizations by James Fenimore Cooper. One can argue that what developed in the film genre was the natural evolution of themes and ideas in the genre's origin, with influence from literary sources always contributing (the importance of *King Lear* to *Man of the West*). This concern may be personal, but attention to literary origins and the natural direction of an artist's career may be a more sensible approach to the Western.

The contribution of Lenihan's book is its comprehensiveness. It is the nature of genre scholarship to be inclusive rather than to concentrate on a handful of films bearing privileged positions outside the genre; Lenihan is to be congratulated for not forgetting *Last Train from Gun Hill* and *Three Hours to Kill,* and for his detailed bibliography and indices. One does not want to be snide in commenting on a book such as this, since genre study presents a massive and tiring effort, which is why little of it now appears on local bookshelves. *Showdown* will help fill the gap.

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A STUDY OF THE HONG KONG MARTIAL ARTS FILM

Program book for the Fourth International Hong Kong Film Festival, April 1980. (Bilingual text.) HK$8 (approx. US$1.60) plus postage from: Senior Information Officer (publications), Public Information Unit, Urban Services Department, First Floor, Club Lusitano Bldg., Central, Hong Kong.

Much fan-magazine-type nonsense has been written about *kung fu* and related martial-arts films. This carefully prepared, meticulously intelligent, and sumptuously produced book sets a welcome new standard. It was apparently done, for the Hong Kong Urban Council, as a feature of last year's festival. It is unclear whether substantial numbers of copies will be available but I hope they are. The essays include many by Chinese critics, both on individual film-makers and on background factors such as the Shaolin tradition. Tony Rayns and Roger Garcia are also major contributors—the latter bringing full-caliber Lacanian and Freudian artillery to bear. But the general tone of the articles is concrete, specific, teasing out a surprising depth of ramifications in these after all quite formulaic films. Biographical notes are given for 35 prominent figures; there is a filmography, and notes for the films shown at the festival. A pleasant touch is a series of photographs in flip-book form at the lower corners of pages—a selection of sets from the "Ten Forms Fist," done by Kwan Tak-Hing. —E.C.

FROM ENCHANTMENT TO RAGE
The Story of Surrealist Cinema

By Steven Kovacs. London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1980.

Most critics and historians of Surrealist film have been too caught up in the infectious spirit of the movement to provide the kind of balanced historical perspective necessary to a fair assessment and analysis of the films produced by Surrealist artists. These critics[1] supported with such enthusiasm the revolutionary spirit and irrationalism so important to Surrealism that their work stood more as corollaries to, rather than elucidations of, the Surrealism practiced in the films. Over and over the same anecdotes have been told, the same precursors enumerated, the same expansive claims made for the Surrealistic tendencies of countless films and film-makers with no connection to the actual movement. (The Marx Brothers, Buster Keaton and Josef von Sternberg have been frequent contenders in this category.) This expansive tendency reached an absurd culmination in Michael Gould's 1976 *Surrealism and the Cinema,* a book that only rarely acknowledged the movement and that claimed film-makers as diverse as Walt Disney and Michael Snow as important contributors to the "surrealist sensibility." Clearly the sense of the "ism" of this important film movement was in danger of getting lost altogether.

What has been sorely needed for some time has been a return to the history of Surrealism proper: how the Surrealist poets and artists in the main phase of the movement (1923-1930) turned their talent and energy to film; how their painting, photography and poetry found new forms of expression in this emerging art; the development of this new aesthetics of film from the "enchantment" of the early twenties to the "rage" typified by the 1930 *L'Age d'or;* and finally, careful definitions and descriptions of the limited body of films actually made under the direct influence of the movement. Steven Kovàcs does all this with a thoroughness and clarity that inaugurates standards of careful scholarship much needed in this field.

If anything, Kovàcs is too cautious a scholar and historian. He ventures very little in his analyses of the films themselves nor does he challenge, or in any way deal with, some of the more provocative readings that have been offered of them.[2] Nevertheless, his sometimes plodding readings are accurate descriptions, his accounts of production and reception of each film are informative, and his cautious evaluations of each director's work are well-considered. If the book offers no exciting new insights neither does it get carried away in vague hyperbole.

The best, and most original, parts of the work are the well-researched sections on the unproduced screenplays of Appollinaire, Desnos and Artaud as well as each of these poets' often incisive, always interesting, writings on the cinema. Here Kovàcs gives serious attention to work that has formerly been treated much too cursorily: Appollinaire's crucial early interest in film and his interesting unproduced screenplay *La Bréhatine;* Robert Desnos's enthusiastic film reviews, his lyrical praise of the medium in general and his many unproduced screenplays of uneven quality; and Artaud's more significant screenplays and theoretical writings on the cinema.

At his worst Kovàcs lacks both subtlety and complexity. His psychological perceptions whether of the film themselves—*Etoile de mer* expresses "the violence inherent in female sexuality"—or of their makers are often embarrassingly crude. Kovàcs's understanding of the nature of the Surrealists' appropriation of the Freudian unconscious is disappointingly superficial. Although he has carefully presented much that is important in Surrealist writings on the cinema, he often fails to make important connections between these writings and the cultivation of dreams, automatic writing and poetic imagery evolving on other artistic fronts and culminating in Breton's pontifical pronouncements. He does better with the influence of Marxism but oddly chooses to present this influence as a kind of postscript near the end rather than as an integral part of the story he relates.

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Finally, in an effort to offer something new in the discussion of Buñuel and Dali's collaboration, Kovàcs attempts to reverse the by now conventional praise of Buñuel's contribution at the expense of Dali. Although this is a courageous attempt to counter decades of prejudice against the reactionary Dali, it fails as a specific rehabilitation of his filmmaking reputation. Dali simply did not have that much to do with either of their films. What is more, the issue points out a problem in the book's general approach: an assessment of Surrealist cinema is not a question of sorting out individual personalities and their contributions. If Surrealism deserves its "ism" then there is something more to Buñuel and Dali's collaboration than the fortuitous encounter of two individual psychic obsessions. To my mind that something is to be found in the formal procedures of the unconscious which Buñuel and Dali so brilliantly adapted to the creation of their films. Kovacs's otherwise useful book should have given these procedures a little more attention. —LINDA WILLIAMS

NOTES

1. Most important of these is Ado Kyrou's *Le Surréalisme au cinéma* (1953) and *Luis Buñuel* (1962), Raymond Durgnat's *Luis Buñuel* (1968) and J. H. Mathews's *Surrealism and Film* (1961).
2. Kovàcs dismisses, for example, the "numerous ingenious attempts to explain" *Un Chien andalou* before presenting any of them.

THE MOVIE BUSINESS

By David Lees and Stan Berkowitz. New York: Vintage, 1981. $4.95 paper.

This is one of those books that film-lovers *ought* to read; it's necessary medicine even if it doesn't taste good. Lees and Berkowitz write in a flat, journalistic style; in the whole thing the only issue they get at all excited about is the exploitation of children through "merchandising" programs (of figures from *Star Wars*, etc.). But they provide a compact yet well bolstered chronicle of the intricate and mostly grubby business processes through which, miraculously, an occasional good movie not only gets made but even reaches its public. Their story is full of instructively depressing little anecdotes about financing deals, accounting swindles, status competition, Oscar finagling, and (running under everything else) the constant, unswerving, implacable pursuit of profit at all costs. It is, as they say, not a pretty picture, but the book is a quicker and more entertaining read than the trade papers, and in case you still cherish the curious delusion that movies are an art, here's an almost instant antidote. —E.C.

THE DARK OF THE SCREEN

By Sidney Peterson. New York: Anthology Film Archives and New York University Press, 1980. $22.50 cloth, $9.00 paper.

. . . they were moving into the territory of the tigers. They got out the canoe, found someone waiting for them, and cut off her head—it was the Mother of All Fish. She was very greasy and with her grease they made gasoline and a motor and attached the motor to the canoe. . . .

In the middle of the tigers' house was a huge mirror that he polished, and he then stretched out singing in a hammock. The hammock broke and he fell down on top of a jar of flour, which also broke.. . . .

On reading the Amazon Indian myth from which that passage is taken I immediately thought of Sidney Peterson's films, especially *The Lead Shoes* and *The Petrified Dog*. *The Dark of the Screen* carries the family resemblance: I open the book at random and find in one long paragraph (p. 73) the Yangtse-kiang, Tokyo Bay, *The Lead Shoes*, the San Francisco quake, the daughter of Urban X and her belief that half a buttock was better than none, and a quotation from Susan Sontag.

This is neither an autobiography nor a film study, though many details of Peterson's life and films rise to the surface throughout. It is more like a lecture by a writer-filmmaker in residence who has thrown away both notes and watch in order to delve freely into his mental resources—instinct, memory, intelligence. You don't reduce it to three-by-five cards; you enjoy it.

After making his best-known films at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute), Peterson ventured on a documentary among the Kwakiutl of the Northwest and later worked for the Disney Studios. Both the Kwakiutl (with their consumer-goods potlatch) and Disney aimed in their different ways to blend myth with modern society; Peterson, in *his* different way, had already succeeded.

Higher education vies with business as the most typical institution of modern society, paying to rationality the maximum of lip service and the minimum of respect. But the School of Fine Arts, whose director played the drums for *The Lead Shoes*' marvelous sound track, seems to have understood that rationality and irrationality work best together when both are recognized; hence Peterson and his students had their chance to grapple with diving suits and skeletons.

A later teacher at the California School of Fine Arts was Gregory Bateson, who says in *Mind and Nature* that "the random workings of probability will always eat up order, pattern, and negative entropy but . . . for

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Finally, in an effort to offer something new in the discussion of Buñuel and Dali's collaboration, Kovàcs attempts to reverse the by now conventional praise of Buñuel's contribution at the expense of Dali. Although this is a courageous attempt to counter decades of prejudice against the reactionary Dali, it fails as a specific rehabilitation of his filmmaking reputation. Dali simply did not have that much to do with either of their films. What is more, the issue points out a problem in the book's general approach: an assessment of Surrealist cinema is not a question of sorting out individual personalities and their contributions. If Surrealism deserves its "ism" then there is something more to Buñuel and Dali's collaboration than the fortuitous encounter of two individual psychic obsessions. To my mind that something is to be found in the formal procedures of the unconscious which Buñuel and Dali so brilliantly adapted to the creation of their films. Kovacs's otherwise useful book should have given these procedures a little more attention. —LINDA WILLIAMS

NOTES

1. Most important of these is Ado Kyrou's *Le Surréalisme au cinéma* (1953) and *Luis Buñuel* (1962), Raymond Durgnat's *Luis Buñuel* (1968) and J. H. Mathews's *Surrealism and Film* (1961).
2. Kovàcs dismisses, for example, the "numerous ingenious attempts to explain" *Un Chien andalou* before presenting any of them.

THE MOVIE BUSINESS

By David Lees and Stan Berkowitz. New York: Vintage, 1981. $4.95 paper.

This is one of those books that film-lovers *ought* to read; it's necessary medicine even if it doesn't taste good. Lees and Berkowitz write in a flat, journalistic style; in the whole thing the only issue they get at all excited about is the exploitation of children through "merchandising" programs (of figures from *Star Wars*, etc.). But they provide a compact yet well bolstered chronicle of the intricate and mostly grubby business processes through which, miraculously, an occasional good movie not only gets made but even reaches its public. Their story is full of instructively depressing little anecdotes about financing deals, accounting swindles, status competition, Oscar finagling, and (running under everything else) the constant, unswerving, implacable pursuit of profit at all costs. It is, as they say, not a pretty picture, but the book is a quicker and more entertaining read than the trade papers, and in case you still cherish the curious delusion that movies are an art, here's an almost instant antidote. —E.C.

THE DARK OF THE SCREEN

By Sidney Peterson. New York: Anthology Film Archives and New York University Press, 1980. $22.50 cloth, $9.00 paper.

. . . they were moving into the territory of the tigers. They got out the canoe, found someone waiting for them, and cut off her head—it was the Mother of All Fish. She was very greasy and with her grease they made gasoline and a motor and attached the motor to the canoe. . . .

In the middle of the tigers' house was a huge mirror that he polished, and he then stretched out singing in a hammock. The hammock broke and he fell down on top of a jar of flour, which also broke.. . . .

On reading the Amazon Indian myth from which that passage is taken I immediately thought of Sidney Peterson's films, especially *The Lead Shoes* and *The Petrified Dog*. *The Dark of the Screen* carries the family resemblance: I open the book at random and find in one long paragraph (p. 73) the Yangtse-kiang, Tokyo Bay, *The Lead Shoes*, the San Francisco quake, the daughter of Urban X and her belief that half a buttock was better than none, and a quotation from Susan Sontag.

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ONE-DIMENSIONAL MARXISM: Althusser & the Politics of Culture

By Simon Clarke, Terry Lovell, Kevin McDonnell, Kevin Robins, Victor Jelenlewski Seidler. London & New York: Allison & Busby, 1980, Distrib. in U.S.A. Schocken Books. Hardback, £9.95; Paper £3.95 and $7.95.

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To purge *Screen* of Althusser's ideas, and their paradigmatic spin-off, would be its (possibly rather painful) liberation.

One-Dimensional Marxism offers five criticisms of Althusser's cultural theories in various fields. They include 34 pages by Terry Lovell on social relations in cultural production, while McDonnell and Robins spend 83 pages usefully deconstructing *Screen* and demonstrating the havoc Althusserism can wreak when young comrades catch it before they've had enough background in Marxist culturology generally. I won't summarize it here as it's Marxists' duty to read it, and theory-buffs will want to anyway.

But it is worth contexting it in the vexed relationship within two British New Lefts: the Old New Left (born 1956, of Suez and Hungary) and the New Left (of which *Screen* was an offshoot). The O.N.L's mass culture/film connections include Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart, John Berger, and, on the other side of the camera, Alain Tanner, Reisz, Anderson and Richardson. Their tradition extends through a second wave, with Loach-Garnett, as well as BFI films like *Winstanley* and *Requiem for a Village*. Around 1962 a new New Left (Anderson, Nairn, etc.) began using the *New Left Review* to snub their elder brothers in favor of various Parisian systematics. I think it's fair to say that Peter Wollen (who as "Lee Russell" wrote useful auteurist "identikits" in the *NLR*) rapidly packed the BFI Education Dept. with *NLR*-related comrades, so that around 1971 *Screen* was more or less the New New Left at the pictures. Between the two generations came a "Trotskyite," '68-related, generation, including David Mercer, Vanessa Redgrave, and influencing Loach-Garnett too. A fourth, youngest generation/subclass includes the grassroots/agitprop documentarists of feminism, tenants' movements, etc.

The *NLR* reached its cultural nadir when it reprinted Fassbinder's eulogy of Hollywood Sirk. For if Sirk is radical, Hollywood doesn't need conformists. By the extremism of dialectics gone wrong, the N.N.L.'s one or two films were as cryptic, formalist, elitist, and anti-Sirkian as possible.

However, times change, and positions with them. Unfortunately, *Screen* had made its double fetishization on Althusser and semiology. But the more sophisticated comrades of its parent magazine could evolve, in many ways rather closer to the O.N.L. In retrospect it looks as if Timpanaro's *On Materialism* quashed the influence of structural linguistics (and therefore semiology) and of Lacan. The recent appearance of Charles Rycroft in the *N.L.R.* would signal a further move away from Lacananalysis towards the British semantics- and object-relations schools (Rycroft, Klein, Stokes).

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I certainly like to think what feminist film theory would be if the patriarchal, phallocrat, and verbocrat Lacan were dethroned by the maternalist and breastopetal Melanie Klein, and if, along lines just hinted at by Raymond Williams's *Keywords* on one hand, and by the rediscovery of Austro-Marxism on the other, a Marxist empirico-positivism were to prune its metatheory and restore some brute materialism to Marxist thinking. It certainly wouldn't answer all the riddles of all the sphinxes, but at least we'd begin to get some straight answers to some straight questions.

—RAYMOND DURGNAT

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Interrelations Among the Modalities

By Lawrence E. Marks. New York: Academic Press, 1978.

Marks's intent is to demonstrate likenesses and interrelationships among our different senses' perceptions of objects and events. With respect to language, the obvious consequence of such unities is synesthesia, and the book's latter part considers sound symbolism (the conveyance of meaning through speech sound) and synesthetic metaphor (verbal expression of analogies among different sense qualities). An example of the second idiom is Swinburne:

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Marks' single apparent reference to film is somewhat antiquated: ". . . like viewing a nickelodeon, each of whose snapshots captures events in three dimensions of space at a moment in time." (p. 157). Yet at its heart, *The Unity of the Senses* poses two interesting challenges to current enthusiasms respecting film theory and its applicability to film practice.

First there is the proposition, argued a decade before by Rudolf Arnheim in *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), that our senses grasp generic structural features. Perception and cognition are most deeply intertwined. If it can be fairly said that contemporary systems of semiotic code-recognition tend to support a mentalistic, data processing-like set of assumptions, supplemented by Lacanian rationales for spectator empathy, then perception and cognition research may provide other frames of coherent reference for film study, even some which might, too, embrace non-narrative forms to greater effect than Metz *et al.*

Second, the kinds of experimental research on which such a book as Marks draws enlists claims to statistical confidence which are, to say the least, uncommon in realms of film speculation. For example, Frequencies of Synesthetic Associations Between Colors and Vowels (obtained from 400 people and covering six languages) provide curiously skewed agreements that, say, *e* (as in m*a*te) is yellow and *i* (as in m*ea*t) is white. "Bright" vowel sounds produce the whitest colors. In other studies, the higher frequency vowels suggest smaller sizes. Color, size and sonority are features of film.

The foregoing is not to suggest that movie screens ought to be infiltrated by audiometers and color meters, or indeed that our awareness of image cannot be described as well in historical and cultural terms. See, for example, John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730–1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1972) or Forest Robinson, *The Shape of Things Known* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1972). Rather it is proposed that states of contemporary knowledge share many more affinities with the totality of film than linguistics does alone. Boundaries between sense and thought are nothing if not porous, and sense may deserve closer attention in film quarters than the last decade has encouraged.

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Comparative courses in film and literature are becoming increasingly popular throughout universities and colleges, and perhaps Kittredge and Krauzer had this in mind when devising *Stories Into Film.* This interesting and somewhat provocative anthology is a "source" study of

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nine short stories that have been adapted into films. The stories are diverse, creatively written, and highly readable, with each utilizing different narrative approaches. Included is the bizarre yet compassionate *Freaks;* the obsessively voyeuristic *Rear Window* and *Blow-Up;* and the reverential Western mythology of *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance.*

The editors explain in the introduction that their purpose is "to suggest some ideas about the relationship of film to literature, and to encourage the reader to pursue the topic further." For the most part, they are successful; but their analysis is too brief and sometimes painfully obvious. They tell us that literature invites us to *see* with our minds and that film permits us to *see* with our eyes, or that art helps us to structure our lives and understand the world in which we live. Yet Kittredge and Krauzer only scratch the surface, rarely exploring important issues of adaptation (narrativity, point of view, the use of time and space). What makes this anthology enticing, however, is the inclusion of two invaluable bibliographies of recent articles and books that substantially cover the relationship between film and literature. —BILL DESOWITZ

DU CINEMA SELON VINCENNES

Department of Cinematographic and Audiovisual Studies of the University of Paris VIII. Paris: Filmeditions LHerminier, 1979.

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André Bazin among its regular contributors and where François Truffaut's name was first mentioned.

Robert Benayoun, *Alain Resnais, arpenteur de l'imaginaire.* Stock-Cinema, 14 rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie, 75006 Paris. Probably the best book to date—in any language—on this usually elusive director. Surely merits an English translation. Useful, often entertaining interviews with such Resnais collaborators and friends as David Mercer and Remo Forlani, as well with Resnais himself, are appended.

Roger Boussinot, *Encyclopédie du cinéma.* Two volumes, Editions Bordas, 37 rue Boulard, 75014 Paris. Although marred by a good deal of misinformation and missing entries on a number of major directors (Boussinot says this is intentional since some of them, he feels, aren't of much interest to film history), this still provides some interesting reading. Complements well Sadoul's and Mitry's histories of world cinema.

Cahiers du Cinéma has launched its own collection of film-related books, most in collaboration with Gallimard (5 rue Sebastien-Bottin, 75007 Paris): Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire;* Jean Giono, *Oeuvres cinématographiques I (1938–59);* Nagima Oshima, *Ecrits (1956–70);* Jean-Louis Schefer, *L'homme ordinaire au cinéma.*

Maria Casarès, *Résidente privilegiée.* Fayard Editions, 75, rue des Saints-Peres, 75006 Paris. Memoirs of the actress most commonly associated with *Les Enfants du Paradis* and *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne.*

Centre National de la Cinématographie, *Image et magie du cinéma français.* Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers, 292, rue Saint-Martin, 75003 Paris. Heavily illustrated catalogue issued to accompany the first major exposition devoted to the French cinema. Contains many rare documents.

Michel Ciment, *Kubrick.* Calmann-Levy, 3 rue Auber, 75009 Paris. Expensive but worthwhile study of the author of *2001.* Possibly better than anything that's yet appeared in English. Well-illustrated and documented.

Cinéma d'Aujourd'hui, "Le Cinema en 100,000 pages. Catalogue generale de l'édition cinématographique de langue francaise 1980" (a supplement to #16, Spring 1980, 5F), "Le Cinéma Japonais au Présent 1959-79" (#15, Winter 1979-80, 33F), "Actualité du Cinéma américain" (#14, Fall 1979, 35F). Filmeditions/Pierre Lherminier, Editeur, 38, rue Chanzy, 75011 Paris. If Lherminier's name is on a book, you can count on its being thorough, innovative and packed with information; these three numbers of *Cinéma d'Aujourd'hui* are no exception.

Francis Courtade, *Les Maledictions du cinéma français: Une Histoire du cinéma français parlant (1928–1970).* Editions Alain Moreau, 4, rue Charlemagne, 75004 Paris. Courtade's title and subtitle definitely understate his book's range and depth; this is one of the best books to have appeared of late on the French cinema, probably the most cogent explanation of why the French film industry seems perpetually in crisis. A good candidate for English translation.

Edgardo Cozarinski, editor, *Jorge-Luis Borges: sur le cinéma,* Editions Albatros, 14, rue Armorique, 75015 Paris. A collection of the Argentinian writer's film writings.

Jean-Luc Douin, *Comédiennes d'aujourd'hui: Isabelle Adjani, Isabelle Huppert, Dominique Laffin, Miou Miou, Christine Pascal, Maria Schneider.* Paris: Editions Lherminier 1980. Interviews with and filmographies for the six principal actresses of the new French film generation.

Charles Ford, *Pierre Fresnay,* Editions France-Émpire, 68 rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 75001 Paris. As usual, the noted French film scholar comes up with an interesting, though at times questionable, analysis of the work of one of France's greatest film actors.

Beatrix Forissier, *Les belles années du cinéma à travers la carte postale 1895–1935.* Les Editions de l'Amateur, 6 rue Milton, 75005 Paris. An elegant, large-format book on the first forty years of the cinema as seen through the postcards which were then an integral part of movie promotion. About half the cards deal with the American cinema, the other half with the French.

Claude Gauteur, *Jean Renoir,* Editeurs Français Réunis, 21, rue de Richelieu, 75002 Paris. One more study on the author of *Rules of the Game,* but still a rather lucid one. Perhaps doesn't provide any new information on Renoir, but nevertheless makes one look at this director in a new light.

Jean Gruault, *Mon Oncle d'Amérique,* Paris: Editions Albatros 1980. (14, rue Armorique, 75015 Paris). The screenplay for Alain Resnais's latest *chef-d'oeuvre* by the little known, much underrated genius of French screenwriting, Jean Gruault, author of Truffaut's *Jules and Jim, The Wild Child, Two English Girls, Story of Adele H.* and *Green Room,* Rivette's *Paris Nous Appartient* and *La Religieuse,* Godard's *Les Carabiniers* and Rossellini's *The Rise to Power of Louis XIV.*

François Guerif, *Le Film noir,* Editions Henri Veyrier, address unavailable. Another one of those coffeetable tomes on the detective-mystery film genre, but this time done by a writer who lives and breathes the genre (Guerif is editor of *Polar,* the celebrated French detective-mystery journal).

Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, *Le Cinéma des français, la Ve Republique (1958–1978).* Stock Cinema, 14, rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie, 75006 Paris. An admirable attempt to interlink contemporary French cinema to the political evolution of the Fifth French Republic, although the case is at times overstated.

François Lacloche, *Architectures de cinémas.* Editions du Moniteur, 17 rue d'Uzes, 75002 Paris. A handsomely illustrated (color and black and white) treatise on the

movie house and its relationship to the evolution of the film. Concentrates on France, but contains so much material on other countries (especially the United States) that its conclusions are virtually applicable to movie architecture around the world.

Marcel L'Herbier, *La Tête qui tourne*. Editions Pierre Belfond, 3 bis Passage de la Petite-Boucherie, 75006 Paris. Memoirs of the recently deceased French film pioneer who is little known outside France, though deserving of more attention.

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Oshima, *Ecrits 1956–1978: Dissolution et jaillissement*. Editions Gallimard, 5, rue Sebastien-Bottin, 75007 Paris. First of a collection of books on the cinema copublished with *Cahiers du Cinéma*.

Roger Regent and Georges Charensol, *50 Ans de cinema avec René Clair*. Editions de la Table Ronde, address unknown. Probably the best extant study of Clair by two men who have known him for as long as his career. A revised and expanded edition of the 1950 first printing. A good candidate for translation.

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Jean Roux and René Thevenet, *Industrie et commerce du film en France: Production-distribution-exploitation*. Editions Scientifiques et Juridiques, 21–23, boulevard Richard-Lenoir, 75011 Paris. 86. An ideal companion to Michael F. Mayer's *The Film Industries* and Baumgarten and Farber's *Producing, Financing and Distributing Film*. Given its thoroughness and legal precision, this is one of the definitive accounts of the inner workings of the French film industry, the side not often seen in French film writing. Moreover, an excellent handbook on the setting up of coproductions with the French.

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Carpozi, George, Jr. *The John Wayne Story*. New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1979. The John Wayne Biography has become a kind of sub-genre whose plot nexuses are as important as in a John Wayne Western: the transition from Marion Michael to Duke; football at USC; work for John Ford; the marriages; the Encino fire, and so forth. This edition updates a 1972 publication, and the author includes a Wayne response to the first book: Wayne found parts inaccurate and didn't remember Carpozi.—J.F.

Cooper, Jackie with Dick Kleiner. *Please Don't Shoot My Dog: The Autobiography of Jackie Cooper*. New York: Morrow, 1981. $12.95. The often sad and sometimes downright pathetic life of a famous child star; interview material intercut with Cooper's reminiscences. —E.C.

Davis, Sammy Jr. *Hollywood in a Suitcase*. New York: Morrow, 1980. $11.95. Lively memoirs of a self-confessed movie buff.—E.C.

Dundy, Elaine. *Finch, Bloody Finch*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980. $14.95. The tumultuous life and loves of a remarkable actor.—E.C.

Dunne, Philip. *Take Two: A Life in Movies and Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980. Dunne's memory of *Chien Andalouse* (*sic. p. 152*) is a little jumpy, but the book self-admittedly seeks as much emotional as

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factual accuracy. His leadership of the Committee for the First Amendment during HUAC and his role in the Screen Writers Guild and Democratic politics provide Dunne with a perspective untypical of much retrospective California political polemics. Further, Dunne urbanely seems to view friend and foe with singular fairmindedness.—J.F.

Freedland, Michael. *Gregory Peck.* New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1980. $10.95. Peck went to Berkeley (pre-med) and first acted in a student production—Starbuck in *Moby Dick*—because he was tall as well as dark and handsome. A workhorse performer, he was one of the mainstays of the industry, and also served both as president of the Academy and chairman of the board of the American Film Institute. He knew LBJ. Freedland's account of his life is fairly routine but more than the usual Hollywood-bio gossip.—E.C.

Gielgud, John, in collaboration with John Miller and John Powell. *An Actor and His Time.* London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1979. The actor gives a portion of one chapter to his film work: enthusiasm toward *Providence*, anecdotes about *Julius Caesar.* In *The Secret Agent*, "Lorre was a morphine addict and an expert in stealing scenes by putting in extra unrehearsed business at the take."—J.F.

Goldstein, Norm. *John Wayne: A Tribute.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979. Some charming early stills precede a gushy recapitulation of old plots and anecdotes. The book has been already remaindered. —J.F.

Higham, Charles. *Errol Flynn: The Untold Story.* Garden City: Doubleday, 1980. Errol gets it on with a girl in the Maharajah's palace (LUSTIER THAN ADVENTURES OF DON JUAN!) and with Tyrone Power (MORE EXPLOITATIVE THAN CUBAN REBEL GIRLS). He smuggles guns, gold and drugs through the West Indies to South America (MORE THRILLING THAN THE BIG BOODLE). He was a NAZI SPY (MORE UNBELIEVABLE THAN OBJECTIVE BURMA!).—J.F.

Hurwood, Bernhardt J. *Burt Reynolds.* New York: Quick Fox, 1979. An affectionate popular biography whose subject apparently sees himself in the tradition of James Stewart and Clark Gable: seeming naturalness done with carefully-honed skill.—J.F.

Keyser, Lester J. and Ruszkowski, André H. *The Cinema of Sidney Poitier.* San Diego: Barnes, 1980. $19.95 cloth, $9.95 paper. Biography of our first black star, who now plans to do more directing, less acting.—E.C.

Kiernan, Thomas. *The Roman Polanski Story.* New York: Delilah/Grove Press, 1980. $12.95. A sensational recounting of Polanski's indubitably sensational private life (especially the legal machinations following his arrest in California), but with some useful detail on his work, especially during the years in Poland and up through *Cul de Sac.*—E.C.

Kleno, Larry. *Kim Novak on Camera.* San Diego: Barnes, 1981. $19.95. A fulsome biography of the beautiful star who, as *Variety* once put it, "gamely tackled a wide range of emotions," and who received rather more ridicule than she deserved.—E.C.

Lamour, Dorothy (as told to Dick McInnes). *My Side of the Road.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980. Her name really was Lamour (well, Lambour), and she started as a band singer. The authoress sounds like a genuinely convivial person, while yet managing to document slights and putdowns (as from the later Crosby) without scratching.—J.F.

Montalban, Ricardo, with Bob Thomas. *Reflections: A Life in Two Worlds.* Garden City: Doubleday, 1980. Montalban's two worlds are a religious and an actor's commitments. His story is structured in a series of flashbacks played against a Catholic retreat. The author-speaker seems more introspective and thoughtful than many actors, although his story isn't especially interesting.—J.F.

Moss, Leonard. *Arthur Miller.* Boston: Twayne, 1980. The contents includes a short consideration of *The Misfits*, regarded as dramaturgy. Neither the author nor Miller appears very interested in film.—J.F.

Oberfirst, Robert. *Al Jolson: You Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet!* New York: Barnes, 1980. $8.95. Hollywood biography.

Pitts, Michael R. *Horror Film Stars.* Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1981. $16.95 cloth, $12.95 paper. Brief career notes on 15 stars and 28 players.—E.C.

Signoret, Simone. *Nostalgia Isn't What It Used To Be.* New York: Penguin, 1979. $2.95 paperback. Signoret, the French actress, is astonishingly intelligent and passionately political. Her autobiography is a cut above the standard actress-tells-all stories, perhaps because she has never defined herself as a star. She details a rich, diverse life with honesty and noteworthy lack of self-righteousness, vanity, or false modesty. Acting was only one part of her experience—politics were another. The book reverberates with history as Signoret signs the Stockholm Peace Petition in 1950, preventing a contract in Hollywood for many years. A complex person, she and husband Yves Montand never joined the Communist Party, although they were loyal sympathizers, largely because of their disagreement with the Party's cultural stance. The characters who populate her book are drawn with compassion and insight, and her sharp memory produces intriguing anecdotes. No one is cred-

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Director Studies

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Winters, Shelley. *Shelley: Also Known as Shirley.* New York: Morrow, 1980. $14.95. Racy memoirs of a long and astonishing career.—E.C.

Criticism

Conger, Syndy M. and Janice R. Welch, eds. *Narrative Strategies: Original Essays in Film and Prose Fiction.* Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL 61455, 1980. A collection of ten intelligent essays on crossovers and parallels between literature and film; includes Dudley Andrews on the omnipresence and complexity of the adaptation process, William Cadbury on the presentational/perceptual intricacies of *The Scarlett Empress,* etc.—E.C.

Daniels, Robert. *Laurence Olivier: Theater and Cinema.* San Diego: Barnes, 1980. $19.95. Survey of the career (no personal gossip, for once!) of our greatest actor, including his stage, television, and film work. Intelligent commentary, credits, excerpts from reviews.—E.C.

Gilliatt, Penelope. *Three-Quarter Face: Reports and Reflections.* New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1980. Profiles (Buñuel, Ford, Hitchcock, Satyajit Ray), interviews (Langlois, Gance, Moreau, Godard, Allen, Keaton), and reviews. All are from *The New Yorker* except for a Nabokov piece. Gilliatt is at her best in the long essay with a sympathetic subject.—J.F.

Sitney, P. Adams. *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943–1978.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1979. $17.95. A revised edition with a new chapter on the seventies; deletes the chapter on Markopoulos at his request. The new material is mainly on Frampton, Snow (*Rameau's Nephew*), Rainer, Brakhage, Broughton, Gehr, Beavers, Singer.—E.C.

Sontag, Susan, Christian Zimmer, Jean-Pierre Oudart, *et al. Syberbergs Hitler-Film.* München: Hanser Verlag, 1980. Essays totalling 84 pages, translated from various sources.

Tuska, Jon, ed. *Close-up: The Contemporary Director.* Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1981. $22.50. Solid career surveys of Pollack, Fuller, Peckinpah, Hill, Altman, Richards, Ashby, Bogdanovich, Scorsese, and Polanski, done on the basis of interviews and often warmly personal; Tuska and David Wilson each contribute several chapters.—E.C.

Williams, Carol Traynor. *The Dream Beside Me.* Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1980. A curiously personal book, in which the author stands in, with a great deal of subtlety and with devoted recall aided by systematic re-viewing, for "the children of the forties" in their relation to the movies of the era. She does some risky rethinking about male and female role models, rape fantasies, the supposed "strong women" tradition, and other touchy matters—handled in a voice that can be slightly gushy but mostly makes this autobiography-of-a-fan raise questions of sexual and emotional politics that do not have easy doctrinal answers. —E.C.

Director Studies

Berg-Pan, Renata. *Leni Riefenstahl.* Boston: Twayne, 1980. $13.95. "Perhaps only God can view *Triumph of the Will* objectively," notes Berg-Pan; but in this comprehensive survey of Riefenstahl's work she makes a valiant attempt, acknowledging its modest reception by the German public, the "nonrational experience" of the speeches, and (perhaps the exemplification of Riefenstahl's own will?) its "principle of beauty . . . based upon eliminating all that which did not fit into her intuitive sense of beauty, and the eliminated elements included women, Jews, and misformed persons." As Berg-Pan states, Riefenstahl's case is a permanent exhibit proving the inextricability of form and content in art. Berg-Pan, who sees Riefenstahl as a feminist seizing her chances in a male-dominated industry, wishes she would simply acknowledge and apologize for her political sins, and allow herself to be absolved because of her art. But we may doubt if it would be so easy—nothing

involving Riefenstahl is or is likely to be uncontroversial. Based upon a careful reexamination of original extensive documentation, much of which undermines Riefenstahl's own versions of events, this work steers a careful course between excusing the artist and condemning the Nazi collaborator.—E.C.

Castelli, Louis P., and Cleeland, Caryn Lynn. *David Lean.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980. $18.50. A guide to references and resources: biographical and critical essays, synopses, credits, bibliography.

Ciment, Michel. *Le Livre de Losey: Entretien avec le cinéaste.* Paris: Stock, 1979. "The Book of Losey"—it deserves its title—is in effect a large-scale expansion of the compact interview book Tom Milne did (1968, Doubleday) for the Cinema One series. Strongly recommended. For some key parts of the story, Ciment necessarily only expands on Milne: the development of *Galileo* with Brecht and Laughton, the interaction with Dirk Bogarde which so affected both their careers. However, Ciment's advantage over Milne goes far beyond being able to carry the story through 1979 (*Don Giovanni*). We get in sufficient and relevant detail the Wisconsin-Dartmouth "Magnificent Ambersons" upbringing, and just enough candidness both on Losey's politics and private life. The characterizing anecdotes (Welles, Aldrich, *et al.*) are both fresh and surprising: John Wayne was on the point of making a Losey film *in 1951,* and at one early stage of his blacklist period Pat O'Brien supplied his hideout. Losey's choice of "personal" and "impersonal" films—the latter presumably shot on technique?—includes in the second list *Accident* and *The Servant,* not only the early-British blacklist thrillers.—J. M. PURCELL

Coyle, Wallace. *Stanley Kubrick.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980. $24.00. A guide to references and resources, with credits, synopses, and introductory essay.

Dick, Bernard. *Billy Wilder.* Boston: Twayne, 1980. A survey of the films, arranged in relevant pairs and triplets: a sturdy defense of Wilder's taste, as well as his ingenuity.—E.C.

di Franco, J. Philip, ed. *The Movie World of Roger Corman.* New York: Chelsea House, 1979. Corman's exceptional output as writer, director, producer and distributor is illustrated by stills and posters, and supported with interview materials. The terrors of low-budget production are often amusing, and the formulas terrifying. "There was a male sexual fantasy to be exploited, comedic subplot, action/violence, and a slightly to-the-left-of-center social subplot. Those were the four elements that were required for the nurses' pictures. And then frontal nudity from the waist up and total nudity from behind and no pubic hair and get the title of the picture somewhere into the film and go to work. So that was essentially it." (Jonathan Kaplan, p. 55).—J.F.

Gaston, George. *Karel Reisz.* Boston: Twayne, 1981. $13.95. Reisz is not only the author of the best book on film editing ever written, but a better director than he is usually given credit for (would it help if people remembered that he is not British but a Czech, and that his style has more in common with Forman than Lean?). In his quietly stylish way, Reisz is a poet of modern dementias and a genuine *auteur.* This workmanlike study traces his career—only six features so far—and gives a careful if not terribly penetrating interpretation of the films.—E.C.

Harding, Bill. *The Films of Michael Winner.* London: Frederick Muller, 1978. Winner is a popular and prolific English producer-director whose credits reflect the variety as well as the ups-and-downs of his career: *I'll Never Forget What's 'isname, Death Wish, Lawman, Scorpio, Killer of Killers, The Nightcomers, The Big Sleep.* Winner is an avowedly commercial director, that is, he makes films to attract large audiences, avoids excess footage, and comes in on budget. Harding's book is thoroughly researched, factually inclined, and supportive.—J.F.

Higgenbotham, Virginia. *Luis Buñuel.* Boston: Twayne, 1979. The author gets *Un Chien Andalou* in the context of contemporary avant-garde, underlining the film's satiric view of film tricks as well as its Spanish images. She thinks Buñuel's resignation from the Museum of Modern Art more likely to have been based on his old Communist affiliations than on Dali's say-so. After the Mexican films, Higgenbotham separates the work into character studies and social satire.—J.F.

Hirsch, Foster. *Joseph Losey.* Boston: Twayne, 1980. Surveys all of Losey's work, from the Hollywood beginnings through the depths of the blacklisted years to his eminence after *The Servant;* includes his little-known play adaptations, *A Doll's House* and *Galileo* (which he once staged in LA with Charles Laughton, under Brecht's eye).—E.C.

Johnston, Claire and Paul Willemen. *Jacques Tourneur.* Edinburgh Film Festival, 1975. Available from New York Zoetrope. Essays in this collection range from fairly orthodox comparisons between *Night of the Demon* and *Circle of Danger* and an appreciation of *I Walked With a Zombie* to the proposition that Tourneur proposes a universe animated solely by signs of non-sense. The editors' contributions emphasize problems of reading and of text construction. Johnston considers *Anne of the Indies* as concerned largely with "the problematic nature of the fundamental fact of bi-sexuality, the working through at the Symbolic level involving a flight from the full implications of a bisexuality, despite the masquerade."

Willemen concentrates on narrative structural patterns, particularly contrasting "classic" construction,

as in *Stars in My Crown* and the fragmentary *I Walked With a Zombie.* Auteurists may be most struck by Willemen's observation that ". . . the notion that a particular piece of work constitutes the self-expression of an individual always has distinctly excremental overtones. The individual in question presses something out of himself/herself which he/she then deposits on a piece of paper or on the screen . . ." After that, Tourneur's modest moments of personal pride in his work, described in a final interview, sound quite unintentionally self-revelatory.—J.F.

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Genre Studies

Druxman, Michael B. *The Musical: From Broadway to Hollywood.* Cranbury, NJ: Barnes 1980. $17.50.

Finch, Christopher. *Walt Disney's America.* New York: Abbeville, 1978. Disneyana structured around the United States as a formative influence (Kansas City, Middle America) on Walt, and then Walt as a power of his own ("as American as Donald Duck"). Pictures include memorabilia, cels, live-action stills, and shots from Disneyland. Most interesting are the animation layout drawings and background paintings.—J.F.

Glut, Donald F. *Classic Movie Monsters.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1978. A follow-up to Glut's *The Frankenstein Legend* and *The Dracula Book,* this one covers, most thoroughly, mummies, werewolves, invisible men, King Kong, etc. in film and print, but incomprehensibly neglects such sub-genres as the were-tiger film (e.g., PRC's all-but-forgotten *Tiger Fangs,* 1943) and the giant-crab movie (*Port Sinister, Attack of the Crab Monsters* and *Mysterious Island* are prominent titles in this area). Next time perhaps?—DON WILLIS

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than his nemesis. Otherwise, this material bypasses argumentation and theory in favor of social-historical context and film descriptions. As such, *Crime Movies* proves to be a valuable historical document of record, superior to its generic peers, and the author's best work to date. Of particular value are descriptions of less-seen early sound features on the order of *Doorway to Hell* (1930), Hawks's *The Criminal Code* (1931), and *The Secret Six* (1931, written by Frances Marion), as well as the MGM mid-thirties *Crime Does Not Pay* series of shorts. When hoods became G-Men, the feds turned author. Derived from J. Edgar Hoover's book *Persons in Hiding*, a Bonnie and Clyde appeared in 1939 with the same title, followed by, among others, a Ma Barker, *Queen of the Mob* (1940).

Tzvetan Todorov's book, cited in the bibliography, is available in English translation: *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Cleveland: Press of Case Reserve University, 1973). Raymond Borde, *Panorama du film noir américain: 1941–1953* has been reprinted in facsimile (Paris: Editions d'Aujourd'hui, 1976). —J.F.

Edmonds, I.G. and Mimura, Reiko. *Paramount Pictures and the People Who Made Them.* New York: Barnes, 1980. $17.50. Anecdotal history of the house Adolph Zukor built.—E.C.

Fielding, Raymond. *The American Newsreel 1911–1967.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981. $16.95 cloth. $7.95 paper. A reissue of this meticulously researched work.—E.C.

Holm, Bill and George Irving Quimby. *Edward S. Curtis in the Land of the War Canoes.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980. $19.95. The authors restored Curtis's *In the Land of the Head Hunters* from a battered and partial print, shooting replacement footage with the aid of Kwakiutl people and giving the work a more responsible title. The greatest still photographer of Indian cultures is thus now also represented by a film of great ethnographic interest which, as it happened, predated and probably inspired Flaherty's first abortive efforts at filming Eskimos. This book recounts Curtis's filming and is illustrated with film stills, production stills taken by his assistant, and documents on the rich Kwakiutl culture.—E.C.

Kovács, Steven. *From Enchantment to Rage: The Story of Surrealist Cinema.* Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1980. While little in the text serves to communicate the emotions reflected in its title, extensive research and ample documentation outline Surrealism's early infatuation with film and surrealist films executed between 1923 and 1930. Particular attention centers on *Entr'acte, Emak Bakia, L'Étoile de Mer, The Seashell and the Clergyman,* and the two Dali-Buñuel collaborations. Information on Artaud's disenchantment with Germaine Dulac and on his unproduced *Eighteen Seconds* carries special interest. An appendix provides shot descriptions of Man Ray's titles.—J.F.

Mast, Gerald. *A Short History of the Movies,* third ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. $20.00. The text has been revised, especially as concerns recent films, and errors corrected; the illustration scheme has been overhauled to use many more frame enlargements, and the index of sources has been updated.—E.C.

Reade, Eric. *History and Heartburn.* East Brunswick: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981. $40.00. A massive, heavily illustrated history of Australian film from 1896 to 1978, by the author of *Australian Silent Films.* A very detailed account, mostly of trials and tribulations, and essential for a serious understanding of the realistic prospects of the Australian film.—E.C.

Richards, Jeffrey. *Swordsmen of the Screen.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980. $15.00. Paperback reissue of the 1977 work—a pleasantly erudite and copiously illustrated volume, written by a respectable but not pedantic historian.—E.C.

Rubin, Steven Jay. *Combat Films 1945–1970.* Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 1981. $15.95. Accounts of behind-the-scenes travail, with brief notes on script problems, shooting, and the resulting films themselves; based on extensive interviews.—E.C.

Slide, Anthony. *The Kindergarten of the Movies.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1980. $13.50. A history of the two years of the Fine Arts company, which under D. W. Griffith made films for Triangle; with filmography, biographies of participants, and assorted documents, including a *Photoplay* interview with Griffith (coming off *Intolerance*) who declared, "There will never be any combination of the speaking and the photo drama, not if audiences can help it."—E.C.

Sorlin, Pierre. *The Film in History: Restaging the Past.* Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1980. $21.50. The book stems from an Oxford lecture and subsequent discussions. Apparently the lecture was regarded (p. xi) as not a little tedious, and this quality extends into the text, which seems alternately obvious and arguable. Sorlin considers historical films interesting for their evidence of how film-makers view the past as a way of describing the present. His examples are grouped around the French Revolution (Gance and Renoir), the American Civil War (*BOAN* and *GWTW*), and the Italian Risorgimento (*1860* and various fifties features). These are followed by comparisons of *The End of St. Petersberg* and *October.* To term *Birth of a Nation* "entirely devoted to the black problem" (p. 210) ignores its first half. To say that *Rome: Open City* "stresses heroism in the face of an ordeal" ignores all but the story's melodrama.—J.F.

Stedman, Raymond. *The Serials.* 2d ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981. $17.50 cloth, $9.95 paper.

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Edmonds, I.G. and Mimura, Reiko. *The Oscar Directors.* New York: Barnes, 1980. $17.95 cloth, $9.95 paper. Witless biographical sketches of the long grey line of directors, whose pictures are praised as "outstanding jobs," "real," "suspenseful," etc.—E.C.

Goldstein, Ruth and Zornow, Edith. *Movies for Kids.* Revised ed. New York: Ungar, 1980. $14.95 cloth, $5.95 paper. A guide for parents and teachers on 430 entertainment films (including shorts and "featurettes") for children, whether seen in theaters, on TV, or in schools or other nontheatrical situations. Sensible annotations, with source information.—E.C.

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Granade, Charles. *The American Film Institute Guide to College Courses in Film and Television.* seventh ed. Princeton, N.J.: Peterson's Guides, 1980. $11.50 paperback. Well organized guide to the confusing welter of courses offered in practically every college and university. TV programs now predominate—making it additionally curious that, with all this academic activity, there is still no serious journal dealing with television. —E.C.

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International Index to Film Periodicals, 1978. Frances Thorpe, ed. New York: St. Martin's, 1980. Arranged in terms of subject heading, alphabetical by author. Each article or review has at least one entry, more in the case of multiple subjects. Citations include content description. (The 1979 volume is distributed by the AFI.)—J.F.

Limbacher, James L. *Haven't I Seen You Somewhere Before?* Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, n.d. This reference book is devoted to films made more than once: remakes, sequels and series. Release date, country of origin (or studio if US) and literary source (if there is one) include both film and television. The period is 1896-1978.—J.F.

_____. *Keeping Score: Film Music 1972-1979.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981. $22.50. A comprehensive guide to film composers, their scores, and available recordings thereof—picking up where Limbacher's previous volume *Film Music: From Violins to Video* left off.—E.C.

Michael, Paul, ed. *The Great American Movie Book.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980. The book's disclaimer is slightly misleading. *All* of the book appeared in Chapter III and Chapter VI of *The American Movies Reference Book: The Sound Era* (1969) except for a twelve-year update of Academy Awards with those films' inclusion in the body of text. Everything else from the earlier work has been dropped.—J.F.

National Film Archive [British], *National Film Archive Catalogue, Vol. 1: Non-fiction Films.* London: British Film Institute, 1981. £50 +£5 postage overseas. Lists 10,000 films from 61 countries, from 1895 to the present. The first of three volumes which will cover the Archive's entire holdings.—E.C.

Ottoson, Robert. *A Reference Guide to the American Film Noir: 1940-1958.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1981. $15.00. Summaries of the plots, with credits, of over 200 *films noirs,* plus selected bibliography.—E.C.

Pike, Andrew and Cooper, Ross. *Australian Film, 1900-1977.* New York; Oxford University Press, 1981. $98.00. Credits, synopses, and box-office and production notes.—E.C.

Robertson, Patrick. *Movie Facts and Feats.* New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 1981. $14.95. A Guinness record book on the first, oldest, longest, widest, most expensive, least expensive, youngest, etc. whosits and whatsits in the business's long and weird history. Easily belongs within its own pages as the most bizarre film book ever published.—E.C.

Rothel, David. *The Singing Cowboys.* San Diego: Barnes, 1981. $10.95 paper. Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, *et al.* Includes the story of how the horse Trigger got his name, credits, interviews, synopses, photos.—E.C.

Rowan, Bonnie. *Scholars' Guide to Washington, D.C. Film and Video Collections.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980. $25.00 cloth, $8.95 paperback. Describes the holdings of archives outside the basic Library of Congress collection—including military, embassy, university, library, rental agency, and many other sources.—E.C.

Schwartz, Elinor, ed. *Media Review Digest.* Vol. 10: 1980. Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1980. A guide to reviews of films, videotapes, filmstrips, records, and tapes.

Slide, Anthony. *Films on Film History.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1979. This directory alphabetically enumerates films that deal with movie history: features, shorts, documentaries and compilations. It includes fictional biographies as well as period Hollywood stories like *The Wild Party* and television specials and series if the latter were done on film rather than videotape. Credits, running time, gauge and rental, lease or purchase source if available.—J.F.

Speed, Maurice. *Film Review, 1979-1980.* New York: Hawthorn Books, 1980. $8.95. This issue of the yearly illustrated survey contains a survey by Anthony Slide of popular film magazines over the ages.—E.C.

Stewart, William T., McClure, Arthur F., and Jones, Ken D. *International Film Necrology.* New York: Garland Publishing, 1981. $35.00. Birth and death statistics for thousands of film people.

Sullivan, Kaye. *Films For, By and About Women.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1980. This alphabetical listing includes both movies in which the issue of sex role is considered predominant and those written, produced, and directed by women; thus a sample page may range from *La Salamandre* and *Salt of the Earth* to *Salome* (produced by Alla Nazimova) and *Salamou: Young Girl of the Niger.* One index identifies women film-makers. Another describes a broad range of subject headings. Includes film sources.—J.F.

Thomson, David. *The Biographical Dictionary of Film, 2nd ed.* New York: Morrow, 1981. $15.95 cloth, $10.95 paperback. Revised edition of this highly personal yet information-packed volume. A few errors may still remain: Joel Finler, author of *Stroheim,* is given as Finlan, and *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* is said to derive from encounter-group "philosophy"; but such things do not detract from Thomson's blend of liveliness and judiciousness.—E.C.

Thomas, Tony. *The Films of Ronald Reagan.* New York: Citadel, 1980. $15.95. The naive introduction relays claims of Reagan supporters that as governor Reagan "reduced government spending." However, the film parts

of the book take the safer path of recounting plots and listing credits.—E.C.

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Technical Works

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Maddow, Ben and John Huston. *The Asphalt Jungle: A Screenplay.* Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980. $15.00. Maddow's and Huston's 1949 adaptation of W.R. Burnett's story reads tighter with more convincing dialogue than *Little Caesar* and *High Sierra.* An introductory essay, detailing the narrative's career in the manner of Wisconsin's Warner Brothers Screenplay series, would have been especially helpful.—J.F.

Schulberg, Budd. *On the Waterfront.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980. The script is followed by a Schulberg Afterword, interesting in its own right although it has appeared elsewhere. Nobody wanted to make the movie, and even Brando returned the script unread. Since the film is now so often cited as an apologia for HUAC friendly witnesses, it's unfortunate that editor Matthew Bruccoli did not include some discussion which might have covered that dimension.—J.F.

Syberberg, Hans-Jürgen. *Hitler, ein Film aus Deutschland.* Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1978. The complete text of Syberberg's film, heavily illustrated with frame enlargements, is preceded by an essay by Syberberg and followed with a glossary of the considerable number of proper names that appear in the production.—J.F.

Wilson, Michael. *Salt of the Earth.* Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press, 1978. The script of Biberman's 1954 film precedes a commentary, written by Deborah Rosenfelt and emphasizing the film's feminist direction and circumstances of production. Period essays by producer, director, a crew member and a featured actor follow, along with Howard Hughes's extraordinary memorandum to a congressman about how to prevent the film's completion.—J.F.

Technical Works

Film-Maker's Guide to Super-8. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1980. $8.95, paperback. Articles drawn from the pages of the magazine *Super-8 Filmaker.* Good basic information on technical aspects of production—except, oddly enough, in the critical area of double-system editing (and mixing) which is essential for anybody wishing to produce complex sound tracks without going to 16mm equipment.—E.C.

Honore, Paul M. *A Handbook of Sound Recording.* San Diego: Barnes, 1980. $14.95. A fairly elementary run-through of the basic technology and problems of film sound.—E.C.

Lustig, Milton. *Music Editing for Motion Pictures.* New York: Hastings House, 1980. $15.95. This is one of those wonderful books in which an old practitioner unloads wisdom accumulated over many years of experience. It may sound impenetrable, but if you are going to do music editing you had better know it: "Some composers never use clicks and will catch all the actions with streamers. Their scores will have timings on some of the bars and by following the clock they can maintain their correct tempo and then look up to the screen for the streamers. Cues have been prepared that had as many as a dozen lines scribed within a 1-minute cue."

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Motion Picture TV and Theatre Directory. Tarrytown, N.Y. Motion Picture Enterprises, 1980. $4.25. This semi-annual publication serves as an advertising display and classified listing for television and film production services: boats to stock shot libraries, accountants to stage rentals. Includes addresses and phone numbers. —J.F.

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Cantor, Muriel G. *Prime-Time Television: Content and Control.* Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980. Focusing on content, Cantor locates prime-time material within contexts of historical evolution, federal regulation, and competition among production companies, networks and the unions. Her careful, documented study extends to discussions of Marxist and neo-Marxist perspectives on audiences and ideology.—J.F.

Coppa, Frank J., ed. *Screen and Society: The Impact of Television Upon Aspects of Contemporary Civilization.* Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979. This book is made up of separately authored essays, and the implications of its subtitle are largely ignored by its attitudes. "Television as a medium is neutral" (p. 22). "Today the problem of televised violence and its exact effects on audiences, particularly pre-adults, remains a moot point" (p. 37). "Precisely what meaning television had for blacks during the 1950s and the early 1960s is difficult to pinpoint" (p. 37). "The critics have put together a strong but selective case against television" (p. 93). For whatever reason chapter six, the only essay making direct references to films (*Modern Times, Network*), is most critical toward television.—J.F.

DeLuca, Stuart M. *Television's Transformation.* New York: Barnes, 1980. $9.95. A comprehensive though nontechnical look at recent and prospective developments in video, including a boom in cable penetration sufficient to reduce network incomes by a quarter, direct satellite-to-home broadcasting (not imminent), TV 3-D, videodiscs, etc. DeLuca is curiously unenthusiastic about the prospects of videodiscs for providing "old movies," and says nothing about possibilities for high-definition video—apparently we are condemned to the present miserable line structure even in his optimistic video-freak future.—E.C.

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Genot, Gérard. *Elements of Narrativics: Grammar in Narrative, Narrative in Grammar.* Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 1979. This dense, elaborate linguistics text defines narrativics as ". . . the name of a general theory of narrative structures . . . the discipline that is firstly charged with the elaboration, the criticism and the comparison of narratological models." The notion of grammar in narrative proposes that axioms defining language-wording apply equally to narrative structures. Narratives in grammar suggests that some grammatic rules identify ways in which language has developed techniques to represent external situations, processes and actions both symbolically and formally.—J.F.

Miscellaneous

Arnold, Alan. *Once Upon a Galaxy: A Journal of the Making of* Star Wars. New York: Ballantine, 1980. $2.75 paper. Includes interviews with Lucas, Kershner, and many of the cast and technical staff.—E.C.

Baumgarten, Paul. *Legal and Business Problems of Financing Motion Pictures—A Course Handbook.* New York: Practicing Law Institute, 1976. $20.00 Meaty inside-the-industry material.

_____. *Legal and Business Problems of Motion Picture Industry—A Course Handbook.* New York: Practicing Law Institute, 1973. $20.00. Like above volume aimed at lawyers involved in the film industry.

Brown, Kent. *The Screenwriter as Collaborator.* New York: Arno Press, 1980. $24.00. A dissertation on the career of Stewart Stern (*Teresa, Rebel Without a Cause, Rachel, Rachel*).

Cini, Zelda, and Bob Crane, with Peter H. Brown. *Hollywood: Land and Legend.* Westport, Conn.: Arlington House, 1980. $19.95. A novelty: the film capital as seen from the real estate point of view—from the melon field that once was at Sunset and Harper through the great days of the star mansions, and up to the television blockhouses that today stand alongside the shoddy decadence of Hollywood Boulevard.—E.C.

Colette. *Colette at the Movies: Criticism and Screenplays.* Alain and Odette Virmaux, eds. Sarah W. R. Smith, trans. New York: Ungar, 1980. Colette's occasional film notes were largely World War I vintage, although she wrote an appreciation of the Scott Expedition film in 1914; Louis Delluc, who took over for Colette as columnist at *Le Film,* credits her with the major French critical endorsement of *The Cheat.* Most of this work reads now like short, quasi-humorous, slight essays, although there is one funny, ambitious rundown on movie conventions, "A Short Manual for the Aspiring Scenario Writer" (1918).

Colette also subtitled *Maedchen in Uniform* and an American feature, *Papa Cohen.* Her own work was adapted to film as early as 1916. She wrote a script (*La Flamme Cachée*) two years later, as well as Max Ophüls's *Divine* (1935) and dialogue for *Lac-aux-Dames* (1934), a Vicki Baum story on which Gide also collaborated and which Marc Allegret directed with great popular success. The major part of *Collette the Critic* is made up of print-derived dialogue scripts of the last two productions.—J.F.

Dukore, Bernard F. *The Collected Screenplays of Bernard Shaw.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980. $35.00. Shaw's tortuous relations with the movie industry adumbrated every peril and most of the potentialities of the vexed relationship between theater and film—from the stiff, line-by-line frontal transcription of *How He Lied to Her Husband* to the subtly scripted and directed *Pygmalion* and beyond. Dukore's 175-page introduction traces Shaw's gingerly relationships with Hollywood and with British would-be producers; Shaw proved a more adept adaptor than Hollywood could provide, and though he did not always get his way, the films bore his mark. He was also well served, of course, by such talents as Anthony Asquith and David Lean, who directed and edited *Pygmalion,* and by Gabriel Pascal, the Hungarian producer who finally made the right connections. Dukore provides lengthy and delightful quotations from Shaw's correspondence and comments on various film projects, surveys critical reactions, and analyses the successes and failures of the films.—E.C.

Eder, K. and Kluge, A. *Ulmer Dramaturgien. Reibungsverluste.* Munich: Carl Hanser, 1980.

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Giustini, Rolando. *The Film Script.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980. $13.95 cloth, $6.95 paper.

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Genot, Gérard. *Elements of Narrativics: Grammar in Narrative, Narrative in Grammar.* Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 1979. This dense, elaborate linguistics text defines narrativics as ". . . the name of a general theory of narrative structures . . . the discipline that is firstly charged with the elaboration, the criticism and the comparison of narratological models." The notion of grammar in narrative proposes that axioms defining language-wording apply equally to narrative structures. Narratives in grammar suggests that some grammatic rules identify ways in which language has developed techniques to represent external situations, processes and actions both symbolically and formally.—J.F.

Miscellaneous

Arnold, Alan. *Once Upon a Galaxy: A Journal of the Making of* Star Wars. New York: Ballantine, 1980. $2.75 paper. Includes interviews with Lucas, Kershner, and many of the cast and technical staff.—E.C.

Baumgarten, Paul. *Legal and Business Problems of Financing Motion Pictures—A Course Handbook.* New York: Practicing Law Institute, 1976. $20.00 Meaty inside-the-industry material.

_____. *Legal and Business Problems of Motion Picture Industry—A Course Handbook.* New York: Practicing Law Institute, 1973. $20.00. Like above volume aimed at lawyers involved in the film industry.

Brown, Kent. *The Screenwriter as Collaborator.* New York: Arno Press, 1980. $24.00. A dissertation on the career of Stewart Stern (*Teresa, Rebel Without a Cause, Rachel, Rachel*).

Cini, Zelda, and Bob Crane, with Peter H. Brown. *Hollywood: Land and Legend.* Westport, Conn.: Arlington House, 1980. $19.95. A novelty: the film capital as seen from the real estate point of view—from the melon field that once was at Sunset and Harper through the great days of the star mansions, and up to the television blockhouses that today stand alongside the shoddy decadence of Hollywood Boulevard.—E.C.

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Henkin, Bill. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show Book.* New York: Hawthorn Books, 1979. For *Rocky Horror* fans, here are profiles of the cast, production stills, lyrics, and music (incomplete). Most interesting are exhibition-advice memos and publicity squibs ("Please inform all exhibitors exhibiting *Rocky Horror Picture Show* that we expect them to refrain from carrying any illegal merchandise. . . .")—J.F.

Herman, Gary, ed. *The Book of Hollywood Quotes:* London. Omnibus, 1979. A wide selection of pithy statements and aphorisms, ranging from obvious to obscure. Some thoughts seem to betray unintended significance: "There is a natural hootchy-kootchy to a goldfish" (Walt Disney). Some sound foreboding: "Why not keep the screen the same size and reduce the size of the audience?" (Irving Brecher on CinemaScope). Amply illustrated.—J.F.

Herzog, Werner. *Of Walking in Ice.* New York: Tanam Press, 1980. A translation of the diary Herzog kept on his walk from Munich to Paris; as haunting as a Herzog film. He walks through remote villages, over snowy mountains, always observing, feeling always on the edge of madness. He sleeps in barns, breaks into empty houses, wears out his boots, and reaches Paris to find Lotte Eisner still alive . . . a bizarre and beautiful document.—E.C.

Horton, Andrew S. and Joan Magretta, eds. *Modern European Filmmakers and the Art of Adaptation.* New York: Ungar, 1981. $14.95 cloth; $6.95 paper. The intent of this provocative anthology is to serve as a sequel to George Bluestone's valuable *Novels Into Films,* with the emphasis on formal and thematic relationships in European films since the Second World War. Included are 23 essays which concentrate on specific films. The essays are well-written, diverse, and usually illuminating. They include Dudley Andrew's discussion of Bresson's unique *écriture* of light, shadow, and sound in *Diary of a Country Priest;* Andrew Horton's contention that Malle's *Zazie dans le Metro* is a formal critique of language; Stuart Y. McDougal's pronouncement of self-reflexivity and autobiography in Truffaut's *Jules and Jim;* Marsha Kinder's description of Godard's dialectics of adaptation in *Contempt;* and Neil D. Isaac's analysis of artifice and reality in Antonioni's *Blow-Up.*

—BILL DESOWITZ

Kobal, John. *The Art of the Great Hollywood Portrait Photographers 1924–1940.* New York: Knopf, 1980. This handsome, thoughtful volume amounts to an auteurist vision of the studios' glamor photographers, figures whose portraits arguably defined Hollywood stars more incisively than scripts or direction. Kobal's essays consider the evolution of publicity departments, shooting sessions, and the portraitists' skills: fashion photographers, in a sense, who dressed their subjects in fantasized character roles. "Portfolios" include the work of Ruth Harriet Louise, Bachrach, George Hurrell, Clarence Bull, Laszlo Willinger, and Joseph von Sternberg (with subordinates).—J.F.

McGilligan, Patrick. *Cagney: The Actor as Auteur.* New York: Da Capo, 1980. $6.95 paperback. Originally published in 1975, now in paperback with a new introduction by Andrew Sarris.—E.C.

Manchel, Frank. *The Box-Office Clowns.* New York: Franklin Watts, 1979. Simple, straightforward essays on Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis, Mel Brooks, and Woody Allen. —J.F.

Mehta, Ved. *The Photographs of Chachaji.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1980. $15.95. This is an account of the planning and shooting of a television documentary, for WGBH, about a poor relation of Mehta's. Filming in India is a delicate business at best, and Mehta's story is full of telling details, wryly observed. The book is important as the first book-length report on a nonfiction film's production, and also as a piece of subtly offhand *New Yorker* prose which quietly captures the madness of the film-making process.—E.C.

Mellen, Joan. *Natural Tendencies.* New York: Dial, 1981. $11.95. A novel: American woman film critic visits Japan, confronts smooth inscrutable grace of pragmatic Japanese, develops odd obsession for a film producer which is intermittently and later unkindly requited, and survives the bruises of her adventure—sadder but perhaps wiser.—E.C.

Michalczyk, John. *The French Literary Filmmakers.* Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1981. $19.50. Mainly useful for its historical or biographical accounts (the critical side is routine) for Cocteau, Sacha Guitry, Pagnol, Jean Giono, Malraux, Robbe-Grillet, Duras. —E.C.

Miller, Gabriel. *Screening the Novel.* New York: Ungar, 1980. $9.95. Intelligent discussions of the dramatic adaptation problems and visual stylistic strategies involved in eight films based on novels: *Hester Street, Susan Lenox, The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946 version), *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?, Treasure of the Sierra Madre, Paths of Glory, The Gangster,* and *The Pawnbroker.* Most of the sources have never been taken seriously, and Miller attempts to show that this is hardly just (he picked his case studies for the literary originals, and not by the importance of the film adaptations). Useful lessons for anybody undertaking a script based on a novel.—E.C.

Miller, Randall. *The Kaleidoscopic Lens.* Englewood: Jerome S. Ozer, 1981. $13.95 cloth, $6.95 paper. A collection of articles on how Hollywood has viewed ethnic groups: not only blacks and Indians, but His-

panics, Italians, Irish, Jews, Slavs, Germans, and Asians. The contributors include Thomas Cripps, Gretchen Bataille and Charles Silet, Patricia Erens, and others. Each article provides a brief survey of typical stereotypical imagery, and most conclude with a word of speculation. Will America's chronic screen racism, now somewhat in abeyance, resurface in yet unimagined forms? Will future villains hail from cultures so far unexploited as sources of vile yet tantalizing menace? Or will the "new ethnicity" result in the whole sordid business withering away in good-humored mutual put-downs?—E.C.

O'Connor, John E., *The Hollywood Indian: Stereotypes of Native Americans in Films.* New Jersey State Museum, 205 West State St., Trenton, NJ 08625, 1980. $6.20 postpaid. This lavishly illustrated study is a welcome complement to the Bataille and Silet volume reviewed elsewhere in this issue, though it inevitably covers some of the same ground. O'Connor gives production histories for an important group of films, from Griffith's 1924 *America,* Ford's 1939 *Drums Along the Mohawk* (and his later attempt to do penance, *Cheyenne Autumn*), the abominable *They Died With Their Boots On, Broken Arrow,* and on up through *Little Big Man.* Film stills are juxtaposed with photos of actual Indian artifacts and portraits.—E.C.

Philological Papers, v. 26: *Special Cinema Issue.* Morgantown: West Virginia University Bulletin, 1980. $7.50. Except for a pair of essays on comedy, the articles here (originating at a 1978 colloquium) deal with literary influences and adaptations. These range from *Der Student von Prag* to Davis Grubb's Novels.—J.F.

Pye, Michael. *Moguls: Inside the Business of Show Business.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980. This book contains a fascinating rundown on moguldom, in particular Jules Stein (MCA), William Paley (CBS), David Merrick (Broadway), Peter Guber (Columbia), Trevor Nunn (British Royal Shakespeare Company) and Robert Stigwood (*Jesus Christ Superstar,* the Beegees). But Pye is wrong about the blues Jack Teagarden sang in 1940 (p. 26). It went "Oh I started up to see Bud Freeman, but I lost my way/And I thought for a minute I was on the road for MCA."—J.F.

Ruppert, Peter, ed. *Ideas of Order in Literature and Film.* Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1981. $8.00. Selected papers from the 4th annual Florida State University Conference on Literature and Film.

Selling Dreams. Welsh Arts Council, 1981. $8.50 paper. British and American film posters, 1890-1976 (catalogue of an exhibition).

Springer, John. *Forgotten Films to Remember.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1980. $16.95. Springer has never forgotten anything, it would seem, but some of the items he includes are not exactly vanished from memory —from Hitchcock's *Blackmail* to Zinnemann's *Teresa* or Wilder's *Ace in the Hole.* Still, a handy reminder of Hollywood's profligate output during the years from sound to 1959.—E.C.

Stempel, Tom. *Screenwriter: The Life and Times of Nunnally Johnson.* San Diego: Barnes, 1980. $12.00. With the quasi-exception of Anita Loos's autobiography, I can think of no full-length books about a screenwriter, so this carefully researched biocritical volume is a novel and welcome addition to the film literature. Johnson was not only a key scriptwriter for Ford, Hawks, King, Aldrich, Ray, and others, but directed *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* and *The Three Faces of Eve,* and also served as producer or associate producer on many projects. Stempel gives an account of Johnson's southern youth and New York newspaper days, and a detailed record of his Hollywood career, complete with power struggles. Johnson was in many ways a typical figure in the old Hollywood, and though Stempel's analysis produces no startling revelations, it adds substantially to our knowledge of how the studio system functioned. Johnson, whom Henry Hathaway considered not enough of a "bastard" to be a good director, comes through as a honest craftsman, one of the best at what he did.—E.C.

Tarbox, Charles. *The Five Ages of the Cinema.* Smithtown, New York: Exposition Press, 1980. $20.00. A veteran distributor's lightning survey of film history. —E.C.

Tibbetts, John C., ed. *Introduction to the Photoplay.* Shawnee Mission, Kansas: National Film Society, 1977. This fascinating volume is composed of corrected, annotated transcriptions from a 1927 course conducted at the University of Southern California. The program was "produced" by the then recently organized Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and speakers include academicians, a critic, and film people. Among the latter are Paul Bern, Conrad Nagel, William de Mille, and Irving Thalberg. In light of today's knowledge, many observations sound alternately naive and inaccurate—attributions to Griffith, for example. What proves to be of particular interest is an emerging sense of how film-makers and film audiences saw themselves at the time of sound's commercial appearance. Thalberg agrees an actor should not sing in his hotel room with accompanying instruments if they're not visible on screen. Screenwriter Clara Beranger believes dialogue pictures seem slower than silent films because light travels faster than sound. (The picture reaches the eye before sound reaches the ear). Dr. J.A. Leighton, Visiting Professor of Philosophy, loyally opines (p. 274), "To see a good drama, whether it is historical or purely

imaginative scenes of the past or present, is far better than gossiping with one's neighbors or riding around in an automobile."—J.F.

Véronneau, Pierre, ed. *Self-Portrait.* Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1980. $8.95 paper. Essays on the Canadian and Québécois cinema, by Peter Morris, Peter Harcourt, Tony Reif, and a whole battery of lively Québécois; with a chronology of important events and films, biographical sketches of 75 film-makers, and notes on 125 key films. A basic source of information on a film world with far more ramifications than generally realized in the US.—E.C.

Weinberg, Herman G. *Saint Cinema: Writings on Film, 1929–1970.* With a new foreword. New York: Ungar, 1981. $14.95. A clothbound reissue of these collected reminiscences and ruminations by one of cinema's most devoted raconteurs.—E.C.

Wilson, Ivy Crane. *Hollywood in the 1940s:the Stars Own Stories.* New York: Ungar, 1980. This is a collection of studio PR handout material done in collaboration with the fanzines. The little first-person pieces are purportedly by such as Humphrey Bogart and Maureen O'Hara. Ronald Reagan's hobby is horses. Shirley Temple went to cooking school after marrying John Agar.—J.F.

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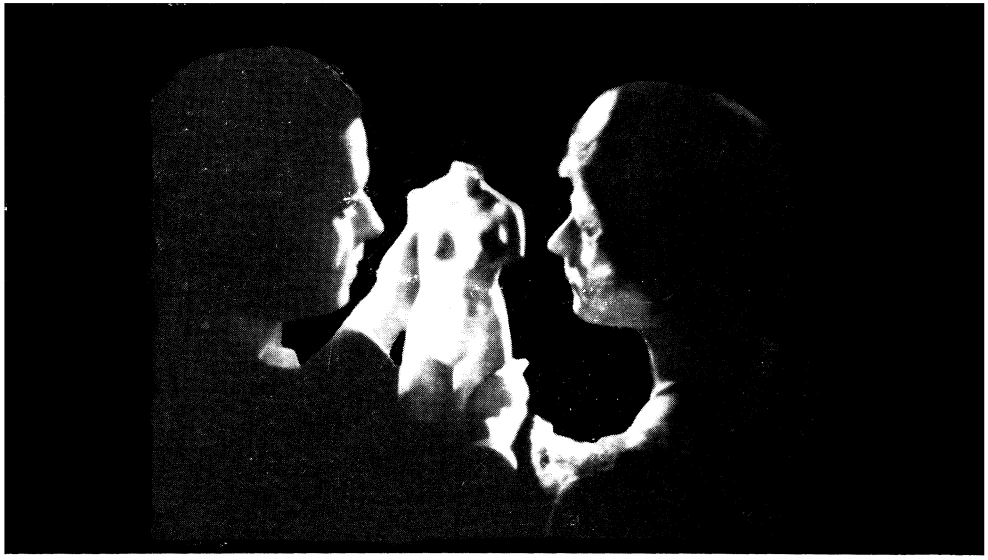

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